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Mrs. Besant

AND

The Alcyone Case

BY

VERITAS

Goodwin & Co., Madras.

1913

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AND

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1913.

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FOREWORD.

This book is published with a view to assist Mr. G. Narayaniah to pay the heavy costs of the trial instituted by him in the High Court of Madras for the recovery of his two minor sons—G. Krishnamurthi and G. Nityananda—from Mrs. Annie Besant. The appeal which is appended, explains why funds are needed and shows the true position of Mr. Narayaniah. Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, the Counsel for the Plaintiff, has kindly read the proofs, and he vouches for the fact that the book contains a full, although necessarily condensed, account of the now famous trial of, "G. Narayaniah vs. Annie Besant." And he writes to say:—"Whatever may be the opinions of the reader on the questions involved in the case, there is no doubt that Veritas has succeeded in producing a fascinating human document which will be of absorbing interest to the student of

human psychology and human belief. As Counsel who appeared in the case, I can say that the book sets down, 'naught in malice and naught extenuates,' and I write this as a testimony to the accuracy of the report and to its being an unbiased account of the proceedings." As the book contains nothing that has not already appeared in the magazines of the Theosophical Society and in the proceedings of the Madras High Court, it should be of use to Theosophists as well as to the general public.

The printing does the Vokkaligara Sangha Press much credit and thanks are due to it.

Mr. G. Narayaniah, vs. Mrs. Besant.

AN APPEAL.

The following appeal has been sent to *The Hindu* for publication.

In the matter of the civil suit instituted by Mr. G. Narayaniah against Mrs. Annie Besant, for recovering the guardianship and

custody of his minor sons, the judgment of Justice Bakewell has established his right to the same, but has unfortunately rendered Mr. Narayaniah liable to bear all the costs of the suit, both of himself and of Mrs. Besant. Mr. Narayaniah, who is a retired Tahsildar in receipt of a small pension, and whose other property is of small value, is not in a position to bear the costs of the litigation, at least amounting to Rs. 6,000. There is an absolutely false and unfounded impression created in the mind of the public by Mrs. Besant that Mr. Narayaniah is largely backed up financially by persons outside India, more especially by Mrs. Tingley of America; on the other hand he is indebted to the kindness of a single public-spirited gentleman in Madras for the funds that have been hitherto found necessary to carry on the legal proceedings against a person so influential and wealthy as the President of the Theosophical Society.

In the opinion of the undersigned, it is a matter of public interest to enable Mr. Narayaniah to sustain the judgment delivered in his favour by helping him with funds to enable him to recover his sons and give them a

suitable education. The issues involved in the litigation are of much public importance from a social, religious and moral point of view. The Indian community cannot be sufficiently on its guard against the creeping into it of beliefs, practices and teachings which are subversive of all morality and social order and which are detrimental to the healthy development of the youths of this country on the lines of clean living and right thinking.

We make this appeal to the public and invite subscriptions for the purpose referred to above. It is hoped that this appeal will commend itself to all those who have followed with attention the judgment as well as the evidence in the case of Narayaniah vs. Mrs. Besant, which contain remarkable disclosures of the course of training, physical, moral and religious, and of the instruction imparted under the auspices of two of the most prominent leaders of the Theosophical Society, to the two minor sons of Mr. G. Narayaniah.

Mr. V. C. Rangaswami Aiyengar, Secretary of the Madras Central Urban Bank, Ltd., Mylapore, has kindly consented to act as Treasurer. Any sum however small may be

sent to the said Bank and it will be thankfully accepted and promptly acknowledged.

Dewan Bahadur P. Rajarathana Mudaliar, C.I.E.
V. Masilamany Pillai, Esq., B.A., B.L.
E. S. Hensman, Esq.
Hon'ble B. N. Sarma, B.A., B.L.
Hon'ble K. R. V. Krishna Row Bahadur, Zamindar of Polavaram
Hon'ble Raja Rama Rayanngaroo, M.A., F,M.U.
Hon'ble Dewan Bahadur V. Ramabhadra Naidu Garu, Zamindar of Doddappa Naicknoor.
Dewan Bahadur, K. Narayana Row, B.A., B.L., F.M.U.
Dewan Bahadur T. Rama Row Garu, B.A,, Deputy Collector, Retired.
Hon'ble Nawab Syed Mahammad, Bahadur.
Moulana Abdus Subhan Sahib, Hon. Presidency Magistrate.
C. Srinivasachariar, Triplicane, Proprietor, S. V. & Co.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTERS.		PAGE.
I.	Adyar: the head-quarters of the Theosophical Society	1
II.	Mr. C. W. Leadbeter	10
III.	Alcyone	18
IV.	Alcyone—(*Continued.*)	27
V.	Alcyone—(*Concluded.*)	35
VI.	Mrs. Besant's Original Statement ...	59
VII.	Mr. Narayaniah's Plaint ...	70
VIII.	Mrs. Besant's written Statement ...	77
IX.	A Commissioner sent to take Evidence.	83
X.	The High Court Case	90
XI.	Evidence for the Plaintiff ...	117
XII.	The Plaintiff's Evidence ...	135
XIII.	Lakshman's Evidence	150
XIV.	Mrs. Besant in the Witness-box ...	160
XV.	The Evidence for the Defence ...	174
XVI.	Mr. Leadbeter in the Witness-box ...	195
XVII.	Mrs. Besant's Address... ...	201
XVIII.	Counsel's closing Address ...	223
XIX.	Judgment	248

Appendix I

G. Krishnamurthi. (Alcyone)

Photo kindly lent by the Father.

Mrs. Besant and the Alcyone Case.

CHAPTER I.

Adyar: the headquarters of the Theosophical Society.

About thirty-eight years ago, two Americans, Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, went to Ceylon and opened up there a Society which they had founded a few years before in America and which they had called "The Theosophical Society." They had no money and few friends, and soon they went on to India, where, after moving about for some time, they established themselves in a beautiful suburb of Madras, on the Adyar River, not far from the wide beach of the Bay of Bengal. Lofty palms and tropical vegetation, ocean breezes and peaceful scenery made their home an attractive place for Europeans who interest themselves in occult matters; and under the astute management of Colonel Olcott, and the influence of Madame Blavatsky's magnetic personality, Adyar became a centre for Indians as well as for Europeans and Americans. Money flowed in, and before the death of Colonel Olcott, in 1907, Adyar (the name of the suburb is here used for the centre established by the founders of the Theosophical Society) had become a wealthy place. An oriental library for the use of students, a depot for the sale of magazines and books on Theosophical subjects, a yearly Convention for mem-

bers, and a Shrine-room devoted to the "Masters", these things attracted persons from all parts of India, and from America, Australia and Europe.

It is not proposed to give here the history of Adyar during the lifetime of Colonel Olcott. This will be found in his "Old Diary Leaves", which have been published in several volumes and which contain much racy reading. A glance at Adyar as it is to-day will be sufficient; and for this purpose information will be drawn from the speeches delivered by Mrs. Besant at the Convention held at Adyar in December 1912, and the statements made by her in the Law Courts, early in 1913.

Of the past history of Mrs. Besant, the President of the Theosophical Society, it is not necessary to write here. She has a world-wide reputation, and she has published her autobiography, which can be obtained without any difficulty by people who desire to read it.

Mrs. Besant told the Magistrate, Khan Bahadur S. M. V. Oosman Sahib, during the actions brought by her against the Hon'ble Dr. Nair and others, and which were tried in the Georgetown Police Court, Madras, in the early part of 1913, with a view to a charge being framed by the Magistrate for their further trial in the Criminal Court, Madras, that she joined the Theosophical Society in 1889, and came to India to work for the Society in 1895, and that she became President of the Society in 1907. After the death of the President-Founder, Colonel Olcott, in 1907, Adyar was made headquarters of the whole Society, the Theosophists in other

places being divided into sections, such as the British Section, the French Section, the American Section, and so on. There are to-day about 24,000 Theosophists, all over the world, and of these 5,000 are in India. At Adyar there are, at the present time, about 50 European and American, and 40 Indian residents.

Mrs. Besant has been President of the Theosophical Society since 1907, and there will be a Presidential election in 1914, the period of office being for seven years.

The Theosophical Society includes an Esoteric Section, or Eastern School, which was founded by Madame Blavatsky. Speaking of this section, Mrs. Besant said on the 30th December 1912 :—

"The Theosophical Society was meant to be the open road, but its members thought they knew better than the Great Ones and hesitated to proclaim the truth, so H. P. Blavatsky founded the Esoteric Section, to fulfil the early purpose of the Society. So the Society went the easy road of philcsophy and metaphysics and religion—a great and noble road—but only those men who are willing to go further and to go faster were gathered by her into the Esoteric Section, which thus became the open road. Many came into it and out of the many a few continued to walk steadfastly onward until they found the Masters."*

* People who desire to understand what Theosophists mean by the "Masters" will find a full description of them in a book called "The Inner Life" by C. W. Leadbeter, published by the Theosophical Society in 1910.

In the Esoteric Section are to-day 3,000 persons, in all parts of the world, and Mrs. Besant is the head of the Esoteric Section as well as President of the whole Theosophical Society.

Speaking of the various activities of the Theosophical Society, Mrs. Besant mentioned amongst others at the Convention held at Adyar in December 1912, "the Order of Service", "the Round Table", "the Golden Chain", "the Sons and Daughters of India", and "the Temple of the Rosy Cross", which has a temple in India. This Order, she said, is open only to members of the Theosophical Society, and is devoted to preparation for the coming of the Supreme Teacher.

Speaking of "the Coming Teacher" Mrs. Besant said "Another purpose believed in as yet by only a few of our members is that the Theosophical Society is to serve as the herald of the Coming Teacher, and to prepare His way in our mortal world, to prepare it by hearts full of love, full of devotion, of study of the signs of the times which lead us to understand. In the days of the Christ Himself a few faithful hearts proclaimed His coming, but the mass of the people would not have Him, because He did not fulfil the crude thought-forms of Him which they had created. Has the world grown wiser in 2,000 years? Who may say? Perhaps He may find the people blind and foolish again as they were when He trod the roads of Judea and was despised and rejected of men. It may be that in His own name, His followers will reject Him, it may be that in the

very name of some of the religions He founded long ago they may refuse to receive Him now. Rejection was ever the fate of the messengers who announced Him before, why should it be different with the modern messengers? Nevertheless we who know are bound to speak, to pass on the message that we have received. We are not the King, but we are His heralds, and no earthly voice shall silence the mouths that have been told to proclaim His coming."

A new step was taken at Adyar on the 25th of December 1912, when seven persons, who were said to have fulfilled all their worldly duties, became Theosophical Sanyasins, and took their vows and the robe in the Shrine-room. "They will be supported by voluntary hospitality and by the Sannyasa fund," said Mrs. Besant, "and some extensions may later be made for the training of young celibate Theosophical workers under these elders, such Brahmacharis being free to leave the Order and return to the worldly life. Lay brothers may also be attached, who are living in the world."

The students living at Adyar have become very numerous, and every room in Leadbeter Chambers and all the bungalows is filled.

During the year 1912, Mr. Charles H. Harvey gave Rs. 15,000 towards the purchase of Besant Gardens, "thus increasing his already large benefactions". "Generous donors" purchased "Shanti Kunja" and "Gnana Geha" at a cost of Rs. 50,000. And legacies

of Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 1,000 were made by persons who have built houses at Adyar.

Speaking of the litigation is which she was engaged, Mrs. Besant said at the Convention, held at Adyar in December 1912:—

"In last year's address I referred to the difficulties which have arisen in India, and have caused some retardation in the progress of our movement in this sacred Land, the Motherland of the true founders of the Society. Those difficulties have been accentuated during the past year, and as some members of the Society have taken part in the accentuation, we cannot expect to have here the joyous report of progress which comes from other lands. There has been a certain discouragement felt, which has shown in the falling into dormancy of an exceptionally large number of members. Nor must we readily blame those weaker brethren. It is hard to stand firm and quietly against continued defamation, especially when libels printed here are re-printed in the United States, and circulated in many languages over the whole civilized world. The tireless malignity which has its centre at Point Loma has been exceptionally active, and has deluged every country with articles so unclean and so mendacious that one stands amazed at the spectacle. As you know, I have uttered no word against Mrs. Tingley, the leader of Point Loma, during the seven years of her ceaseless attacks."

Mrs. Besant went on to say that since the emissary of Mrs. Tingley came to Madras the

special Indian campaign has been started. This, also, " said Mrs. Besant," I met with silence, the silence that I have lately been compelled to break. On what is passing in the Law Courts my lips are at present sealed. I notice that at least three Indians desire that I should be left to fight out this battle unassisted, and alone, as a personal matter. I have nought to say against that policy if it be the will of the Theosophical Society. I have never found in the past, when I won credit and wrought successfully in public work, that the Society was anxious to dissociate itself from that credit and success, and to proclaim that these were a personal matter. There is, perhaps, something a little less than generous in the wish to leave me alone when danger threatens. But I am the first to desire that any crown I win may be given to the Society, and that any stones flung at me may strike myself alone. So I thank those three Indian members who take that line.

"But I am bound to say that it is not likely that the Society will follow them, though I shall take care that its absolute neutrality in all matters of opinion shall be scrupulously guarded. Where, however, its honour and good name are attacked, I shall in future, as President, defend that honour and good name in the Press and in the Law Courts, whenever the assailant is worth noticing, I will no longer silently permit mud to be thrown on the Society, but will use such honourable means of defence as are available, for to the level of the traducers I cannot stoop. I have hitherto followed

as President the practices I followed as teacher, bearing silently all slander and insult. This I shall continue to do where these are directed only against myself personally. But I think it has been a mistake to show this forbearance in the office of President, and where the Society which is placed in my charge is concerned, I shall henceforth play the part of the warrior who protects. If the Society disapproves of this policy, it can very easily show its disapproval by instructing its General Council during the coming year not to propose my name for re-election as President in 1914."

While mentioning the books published by the Theosophical Society during 1912, Mrs. Besant said that Mr. Leadbeter had given to the Society two volumes on "The Hidden Side of Things"; and that he and she together had issued an account of their investigations during the summer of 1910, under the title of "**Man: Whence, How and Whither**". "Of my honoured colleague Mr. C. W. Leadbeter, said Mrs. Besant, what can I say save that we are all deeply grateful for the invaluable help he gives, and that our reverence for his serene and joyous patience under intolerable wrong increases with the years."

"Alcyone, said Mrs. Besant, wrote during the year an admirable booklet on "**Education as Service**", which is being translated into various languages. His first book "**At the Feet of the Master**" has just appeared in Esperanto, as well as in Sinhalese and Burmese, and is being put into Braille for the helping of the blind."

Speaking of J. Krishnamurthi and his brother, J. Nityananda, Mrs. Besant said " There are two empty places that none may fill—those of our beloved " Alcyone" and "Mizar". Alcyone's gracious presence and gentle saintliness are sorely missed, but we all rejoice that he is away from the present evil and that round him and his brother all is bright and pure. May the Lords of Compassion guard the lads and pardon those who " know not what they do ".

The litigation referred to by Mrs. Besant in her Convention addresses consisted of two criminal suits of alleged defamation lodged by her against the Honorable Dr. Nair and Dr. U. Rama Rao for having written and published in a medical journal called "*The Antiseptic*" in February 1911 an article entitled "**Psychopathia Sexualis in a Mahathma: a Clinical Study**" and a criminal complaint made by Mr. Schwarz, the Treasurer of the T. S. at Adyar, against the editor and publishre of the *Hindu*, Madras, for having re-printed this article in the *Hindu* for March 13th, 1911.

Mr. G. Narayaniah, the father of "Alcycone," had previously filed a suit in the Chingleput Court for the recovery of his two minor sons, J. Krishnamurthi and J. Nityananda (referred to by Mrs. Besant as "Alcyone" and "Mizar" in her Convention address) ; and this suit had been removed to the Madras High Court for the convenience of all the litigants.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. C. W. Leadbeter.

Speaking of Mr. C. W. Leadbeter in her criminal suit against the Hon'ble Dr. Nair, Mrs. Besant said "He is a clergyman of the Church of England, but has given up service."

In the "*Theosophist*" for November 1911, Mrs. Besant wrote that Mr. Leadbeter was born on February 17, 1847, and that as a child he went with his parents to South America, where he lived a life of manifold adventure. After returning to England, he entered Oxford University, but his career there was cut short by the failure of Overend, Gurney & Co., in which his fortune was invested. He managed, however, to take Holy Orders, and he worked as a curate of the Church of England until 1884, when he joined the Theosophical Society. Prior to that time he had been much interested in spiritualism and had made various investigations and experiments.

" His last incarnation, "wrote Mrs. Besant," was as a pupil of Kleineas, now the Master M., who was himself a pupil of Pythagoras, now the Master K. H., the future Bodhisattva."

And she says that Mr. Leadbeter stands to-day "on the threshold of Divinity."

Mr. Leadbeter met Madame Blavatsky in 1884, and went with her the same year to India. He worked in Ceylon for some years on behalf of the Buddhist Educational Movement, and subsequently returned to

England, taking with him a young Sinhalese, named Jinarajadasa.

Subsequent to his return to England Mr. Leadbeter became tutor to Mr. Sinnett's only son, and he gave instruction at the same time to Mr. George Arundale.*

In 1905 Mr. Leadbeter was a member of the British Section of the Theosophical Society, and held the office of Presidential Delegate.

At that time some very terrible charges were made against him in America, in connection with young boys and Mr. Burnett was appointed Commissioner by the Executive Committee of the American Section and sent to London to lay the matter before Colonel Olcott, as the American Section of the Theosophical Society had no authority to deal it with the matter. Colonel Olcott called advisory committee to consider the charges and advise him about the matter, and the following people met in London on the 16th of May,1906. Colonel Olcott, President; Mr. Burnett, representative of the Executive Section of the American Section ; Mr. P.E. Bernard, representative of the French Section; and the members of the Committee of the British Section—Mr. Sinnett, Dr. Nunn, Mr. Mead, Mrs. Stead, Miss. Ward, Miss. Spink, Mrs. Hooper, Mr. Glass, Mr. Keightly and Mr. Thomas.

Before the meeting was held, Mr. Leadbeter placed the following resignation in the hands of Colonel Olcott.

---

* Mrs. Besant said in the "*Theosophist*" for November 1911 that Mr. Arundale has now returned to Mr. Leadbeter's charge for higher teaching.

May 16th, 1906.

The President Founder of the Theosophical Society—

DEAR COLONEL OLCOTT,

In view of recent events and in order to save the Society from any embarassments, I beg to place in your hands my resignation of membership.

Yours as ever,
(Sd.) C. W. LEADBETER.

Having heard and carefully considered the charges made against Mr. Leadbeter, some of the people present said that Col. Olcott ought not to accept his resignation, but should expel him. The Council divided, and six being for and six against his expulsion, his resignation was accepted by Col. Olcott.

Towards the close of the same year (1906) Col. Olcott fell ill in America, and he returned to Adyar in a dying condition, being accompanied by an American Theosophist named Mrs. Russak.

On his death bed Col. Olcott sent the following letter to Mr. Leadbeter, and this letter was afterwards published in an American paper called "*The Theosophic Voice.*"

Adyar, January 1907.

MY DEAR CHARLES,

The Mahatmas have visited me several times lately in their physical bodies, and in the presence of witnesses. As my life seems to be drawing to a close, they

have wished to discuss with me matters they desired arranged before it was too late. They asked me to set right the dispute between you and Annie concerning the glamour question (it appears that after the troubles in America Mrs. Besant had attributed to "glamour" her experiences with Mr. Leadbeter on what Theosophists call "the astral plane") and I enclose what they said about it, which Mrs. Russak took down at the time. I am glad to know that it was no glamour, for I have always felt that she (Annie), made a mistake in saying that it was.

Concerning the other matter about the disturbance your teachings have caused, both Mahatma M. and Mahatma K. H. assured me that you did well to resign, that it was right to call a council to advise upon the matter, and that I did right in accepting your resignation, but they said we were wrong in allowing the matter to be made so public, for your sake and the sake of the Society. They said you should have stated in your resignation that you resigned because you offended the standard of ideas of the majority of the Society *by giving out* (the italics are by Veritas) certain teachings which were considered objectionable.

Because I have always cherished for you a sincere affection, I wish to beg your pardon, and to tell you before I die that I am sorry any fault of judgment on my part should have caused you such deep sorrow and martification, for I should have certainly have tried to keep the matter quiet, had I not thought that it would have reflected on the Society if I did so. I feel sure that the

Blessed Ones are striving to calm the present turmoil and hold together our Society from dividing against itself, and I also feel sure that you will be called upon to help, and to forget the self for the good of the whole.

There is nothing I think that would tend to quell the present turmoil so much (and I should die happy if I knew you had done it) as for you to bow to the will of the Divine Ones behind the movement and save the situation. Certainly Their wisdom is your law as it is ours, and They have told both Annie and myself that your teaching young boys to * * * * is wrong. I do implore you from my death bed to bow to Their judgment in the matter, and make a public statement that you will give them and us your solemn promise to cease *giving out* (the italics are by Veritas) such teachings.

It might be that if you did this, the Masters would open out the path of reconciliation to the Society, and you could take up the great work you were obliged to give up, because you unwisely placed yourself in the position of being unable to defend yourself against charges that gravely offended the accepted moral standard of your country, thus bringing upon the Society you loved a great blow which shook it to its foundation, because you were so universally loved and respected.

Once more, my dear friend, I beg you to consider what I ask.

With all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) H. S. OLCOTT.

This letter seems to have been the first move towards the re-instatement of Mr. Leadbeter as a member of the Theosophical Society.

In April 1907 a telegram was sent to Mrs. Besant from the Council of the Blavatsky Lodge asking whether she, if she were elected President of the Theosophical Society, would permit the readmission into the Society of Mr. Leadbeter; and she replied by the following wire:—

"If publicly repudiates teaching two years after repudiation on large majority representative of the whole Society would reinstate not otherwise."

The following extract from a letter sent by Mrs. Besant to the Corresponding Secretary of the Esoteric Section in America in July 1906 and embodied with her consent in a printed circular issued by Mr. Fullerton, the General Secretary, shows her attitude towards the teachings of Mr. Leadbeter before the death of Col. Olcott.

This extract was afterwards published in an American paper called the *Theosophic Voice.*

"Mr. Leadbeter appeared before the Council of the British Section, representatives from the French and the American Sections being present, and voting, Col. Olcott in the Chair. He denied none of the charges, but, in answers to questions very much strengthened them, for he alleged that he had * * * * * * * It was conceivable that the advice as supposed to have been given had been given with pure intent, and the presumption was so, in a teacher of Theosophical mora-

lity anything else seemed incredible. But such advice as was given, in fact such dealing with boys before sex passion was awakened, could only be given with pure intent if the giver were on the point insane. Such local insanity, such perversion of the sex instinct, too forcibly restrained, is not unknown to members of the medical profession. The records of a celibate priesthood and of unwise asceticism are only too full of such cases, and their victims, on all other points good, are, on the sex question, practically insane.

"Let me here place on record my opinion that such teaching as this given to men, let alone innocent boys, is worthy of the sternest reprobation. It distorts and perverts the sex impulse implanted in man for the preservation of the race, it degrades the ideas of marriage, fatherhood and motherhood, humanity's most sacred ideals, it befouls the imagination, pollutes the emotions and undermines the health. Worst of all that it should be taught under the name of Divine Wisdom, being essentially "earthly, sensual, devilish".

How it came to pass that Mrs. Besant changed her opinion regarding Mr. Leadbeter will be seen in the litigation in which she was engaged in the early part of 1913.

In the *Theosophist* for January 1909 Mrs. Besant wrote:—

The General Council of the Theosophical Society has declared by a majority composed of 13 General Secretaries, its 4 official members and 4 out of the additional members—21 in all—that "there is no reason

why Mr. C. W. Leadbeter should not return, if he wishes, to his place in the Society, which he has, in the past served so well."

And in the *Theosophist* for March 1909 she wrote:—

"I am not in a position to tell our readers what will be done by those who disapprove of the action of the General Council of the Theosophical Society in opening the door to the return of my highly-valued colleague, Mr. C. W. Leadbeter. The more liberal minded of them, who are willing to live and let live, will probably take advantage of the new rule (Rule 31) which permits a dissentient minority to organize itself independently outside the National Societies and to attach itself only to Headquarters. Thus it will publicly show its disapproval of the liberty affirmed by the President and General Council; but at the same time will not seek to coerce the great majority of members. The heirs of the famous English Puritan conscience, who cannot be contended to live their own lives, but must also order the lives of those who disagree with them, or failing the power to do that, must assail and ostracise them, shaking off the dust of their feet as a testimony against them, will go out and will play their part in the great Drama, helping the progress of the Theosophical Society in their own despite. For the battles of men are the play of the Gods, and they help both sides, and are mirthful over the mighty game. And at eventide all the heroes gather together, and there is peace and high festival."

Soon after that Mr. Leadbeter went to live at the head-quarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar,

where he has resided ever since, varying his residence with short visits to Italy, Burma and Benares. He is a prolific writer on occult subjects; and he lectures at Adyar, where an increasing number of students, of both sexes, are in Leadbeter Chambers and the other buildings of the Theosophical Society.

CHAPTER III.

"Alcyone."

The following account of J. Krishnamurthi (called by Theosophists "Alcyone") is epitomised from a document written by Mrs. Taylor, and endorsed by the father of the boy, which was produced in the Madras High Court during the case of G.Narayaniah *vs.*, Mrs. Besant.

Mr. Giddu Narayaniah, the Brahmin father of J. Krishnamurthi, says that his son was born on the 4th of May 1895, at Madanapalle, in the Madras Presidency. The astrologer to whom details of the time of his birth were given said that the boy was going to be a very great man.

In 1898 Nityananda (called by Theosophists "Mizar") was born, and from the begining he showed a great intellect.

Mr. Narayaniah was Tahsildar and Taluk Magistrate at Madanapalle at the time when Krishnamurthi was born, and eighteen months afterwards he was transferred to Cuddapah, a malarial district, where Krishnamurthi had fever at intervals, and his life was despaired

of by his parents. From Cuddapah Mr. Narayaniah went to Kadiri, a healthier place, but the fever had taken such a hold of Krishnamurthi that even at the age of fifteen he continued to suffer from it at intervals.

At school Krishnamurthi had a habit of giving away things to poor boys, such as pencils, slates, etc., and of coming to his father to ask for more, and even as a child he liked to give alms to beggars. He was a religious boy, and every evening he went with his mother to the temple and prostrated himself in worship. He was not fond of book study, but appeared to have a mechanical turn of mind. He was generous, and if he had anything nice to eat, he would take a little and give the rest to his brothers. Nitya, on the contrary, held his own share in his hand, and asked for more from his brother, which Krishnamurthi always gave to him.

In 1902 Mr. Narayaniah was transferred to Vayalpad, from there to Jammalmadagu, and thence back to Cuddapah, where he remained until 1906.

In 1905 his wife died.

A few days after his mother's death, Krishnamurthi came running out of the bath room, without his clothes and dripping wet. He said that his mother had been in the bath room and that he was following her. He went on to the room where his mother's *saris* used to be put to dry over night, and stood there, gazing at something, and when he was asked by his father what was there, he answered :—

"Mother is removing her wet things and putting on dry ones."

Afterwards he went to the room where food had been placed, on a leaf, near the spot where his mother had been last lying, and he said that his mother was eating. Then he said that he could not see his mother any more; and when questioned by his father, he said that his mother had looked just as usual, but she had not spoken to him.

Eleven days after the death of his wife, Mr. Narayaniah says that he himself saw her one evening when he was lying on his bed and talking to his elder brother, who had come to him for the funeral cermonies. She came into the room and bent over him and put her face caressingly against his, and passed her hand over his hair. Then she sat down on the edge of the bed near him. He called to his brother, but his brother could not see her; and afterwards she bent over him and whispered that she was going away.

In 1907 Mr. Narayaniah took service at Madanapalle again, for the sake of his children, as fever had weakened them so much; and the same year he retired from Government Service, on a small pension.

Near Madanapalle was a lonely hill, with a temple on its summit, and to this place Krishnamurthi went daily after school hours, while the other boys were playing. He liked to give picnics to his school-fellows, and he would himself carry the food, his brothers thinking it beneath their dignity to do so, as their father was Tahsildar of Madanapalle. He was observant of natural objects, such as trees and plants, and he liked to watch and collect curious insects.

In December 1907 Mr. Narayaniah, who had been a member of the Society since 1882, attended the Convention at Benares, and afterwards he wrote to Mrs. Besant, the President, and offered his services to the Society at Adyar. Mrs. Besant replied that as he had four boys, who would make a noise in the compound, she could not have him, and she pointed out that there was no school nearer than Mylapore, and that he would have to send his boys in a pony cart, and that to do so would be a great expense. He was, however, determined to go to Adyar, and he wrote to say that he would arrange for the boys to be sent to school. But Mrs. Besant said that she did not at that time require his services.

About the end of 1908, the corresponding Secretary of the Esotreic section at Adyar needed an Assistant and he suggested Mr. Narayaniah for the post, and Mrs. Besant promised to speak to Mr. Narayaniah during the Convention at Adyar in December of that year.

Mr. Narayaniah saw Mrs. Besant at the Convention, and she accepted his services, and he moved to Adyar on the 23rd January, 1909, and settled there with his children. Krishnamurthi and Nitya were sent daily to the boys' school in Mylapore, and their elder brother, Shivaram, attended the Madras Presidency College.

One day in February 1909 Mr. Leadbeter met Mr. Narayaniah out with his sons, and asked him to let Krishnamurthi and Nitya go with him to the sea, offering to teach them to swim. Afterwards he helped them sometimes with their lessons.

On the 13th of June 1909, all the inmates of Adyar—European and Indian—sat under the big tree in Besant Gardens to see Nitya enter the Bramhacharya (become a Brahmin). This ceremony is performed as a rule only in Temples and holy places, and the Theosophists watched it with much interest. Mr. Leadbeter, who was present, seemed to observe Krishnamurthi and Nitya very closely ; and one afternoon, not long afterwards, Mr. Narayaniah saw him standing alone beside a tank near Besant Gardens, watching the boys, who were swimming. Mr. Leadbeter then said that he was observing Krishnamurthi, that he was a good boy and he would like, with Mr. Narayaniah's permission, to study him more closely. He asked Mr. Narayaniah to bring Krishnamurthi to his room one day when there was no school, Mr. Narayaniah did so, and Mr. Leadbeter placed Krishnamurthi beside him on a sofa, rested his hand on the boy's head, and began to describe his last birth and life. This was written down by Mr. Narayaniah and afterwards, on a Saturday or a Sunday, when Krishnamurthi had not to go to school, the visits and the stories were continued.

People interested in the stories of the reincarnations of Krishnamurthi, as related by Mr. Leadbeter, may find these things in the *Theosophist* under the title of "Rents in the Veil of Time: Notes on Reincarnation." Mr. Leadbeter says in the *Theosophist* for 1910 :—

"The hero of the first set of lives to be placed before our readers, to whom we have given the name of the Star Alcyone, belongs to the type or ship-load who

take births on an average interval of about 700 years. He does not take the sub-races in regular order, but devotes himself chiefly to the first sub-race of the fifth Root race, at first taking part in several of its migrations from Central Asia to the plains of India, and afterwards incarnating whenever possible in that ancient land of mystery and beauty. Twenty lives out of thirty that we have so far examined have been spent on the historic soil of India, yet since they have brought him to the gateway of the Path of Holiness it is manifest that this devotion to one sacred Motherland has in no way delayed his development. Let his lives be studied that his footsteps may be followed: let the reader see from them what qualities are necessary for the attainment of that Path, so that he also, in his turn, may be numbered among those who are safe for ever, whose destiny is to devote themselves to the service of humanity."

Mr. Leadbeter proceeds to give the last thirty lives of "Alcyone," from 22.662 B. C. to 624. A. D. The following life, taken at random, and condensed, owing to want of space, is typical of them all.

"Alcyone" writes Mr. Leadbeter, "was born in 21.467 B. C. in what is now the Telegu country, not far from Masulipatam, as a son of King Leo. His mother was Orion. He married Heracles who was a daughter of a neighbouriug Raja. He had nine children. A neighbour, and close friend, was the priest Mercury. His mother, Orion, took the body of her own daughter when it was 10 years old, and when Alcyone was 11, and she that had been his mother was now his sister.

Leo was defeated at the hands of a coalition of neighbouring States, and Sirius was sent over from Atlantis by Jupiter to be Governor of the Kingdom, which was then made a province of the vast Atlantean Empire. Sirius fell in love with Orion, and demanded her hand from Alcyone, who gladly gave it, and a very close tie united the two families and that also of the priest Mercury.

The language commonly used in this Kingdom was not Sanskrit, and ceremonies usually began with the word "Ta" not with "Aum." The doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma were commonly known to the people. The Teacher Mercury knew of the greater people behind who sometimes helped. The book that Mercury read in the Temple was written in the City of the Golden Gate by one who was a member of the brotherhood.

The priests in this Kingdom had very strong ideas about a "Lake of Light," which was also Death and Life and Love. All streams led into the lake of Light, whencesoever they seemed to begin. There were traces also of the theory that all that we see is illusion, but the only Reality is the Lake of Light. "We live in the Lake of Light and do not know it. We think of ourselves as separated, but we are each a drop in the Lake." The priests seemed to be perpetually urging the people to get behind the illusion of the senses, and to realize that was the real Presence behind all, and that the separated forms were the separated drops. "When they fall in again they are all one" they said and it is we ourselves who make all the sorrow and trouble." And they had a

prayer to the "Lords who are the Light, who consist of the Light."

In 21.423 B. C. Orion confessed her black magic (by means of which she had entered the body of her own daughter) to Mercury and Sirius and retired to an ascetic life. A son of Alcyone, who was of a wandering disposition, wrote such a glowing description of his travels that Alcyone undertook some dangerous journeys to see the places of which his son had given such an attractive account. In the course of these he met with various adventures, the most serious being that he was captured by robbers and held for ransom, though he contrived to escape by disguising himself as a woman.

Herakles, the wife of Alcyone, died in 21.396 B. C. and Orion, the wife of Sirius, died in 21.392 B. C; and afterwards the two friends journeyed to Poseidonis, where Mars, who had succeeded Jupiter, received them with great honour. Sirius and Alcyone lived together in the same house in Poseidonis for ten years, and both died in 21.382 B. C., hale and hearty to the last. During these ten years they jointly prepared a book on Southern India, which was for centuries in Poseidonis regarded as the classical work on its subject. It was in two volumes, one treating of the different races and their customs, and the other of the various religions—the latter embodying much of the teaching given to them by the priest Mercury.

Further information concering the lives of "Alcyone" is afforded by Mr. E. C. Reynolds, in the "*Theosophist*" for November 1911. He says:—

"At the present time Alcyone is a Hindu youth, and has passed his first initiation with the help of Mercury, better known to us as Master K. H. There are many who hope and believe that in this life Surya's ancient prophecy will be fulfilled, that He wiil take possession of the body of Alcyone to bless the world, even as He did that of Jesus at the time of the baptism two thousand years ago."

"Surya, says "Mr. Reynolds," is the character which appears in Indian literature as Lord Maitreya and is known among Western nations as the Christ."

Continuing Mr. Narayaniah's account of his sons, we find that the interest of Mr. Leadbeter in the boys increased, and in the autunm of 1909, when he came to hear that they had been caned at school, he told their father that their astral bodies had been very much disturbed in consequence, and he asked Mr. Narayaniah to remove the boys from the Mylapore school and place them under his tuition. Mr. Narayaniah hesitated, but agreed to do so temporarily, saying that he must consult Mrs. Besant, who was then in Europe, before he made any permanent arrangement.

On the 14th of December 1909 the boys went to live at head-quarters, and, with the approval of Mrs. Besant, became the pupils of Mr. Leadbeter, Mr. Clerk and others. Later Mr. Leadbeter offered to take all responsibility for the boys and to send them to England. But to this their father would not agree.

Subsequently Mrs. Besant asked Mr. Narayaniah to give the boys into her hands, which he did not like to do.

But she pressed the matter; and on the 6th of March, 1909, Mr. Narayaniah gave Mrs. Besant a letter constituting her guardian of the boys, Mrs. Besant undertaking to give them the best possible education and to send them to an English University at her own expense.

CHAPTER IV.

Alcyone—(*Continued.*)

On January 11 and 12, 1910, a curious ceremony took place at Adyar, called the "Initiation" of Alcyone. Writing about this matter in the *Theosophist* for January 1911, Mrs. Besant said:—

"For us of the Theosophical Society the promise that 1910 would see the beginning of a great growth in dignity and power has been more than fulfilled. January witnessed, at the rare conjunction of the planets noted by all astrologers, the occult "birth of the young child," who in due time shall be the vehicle for the blessing of the world. Two thousand years have run their course since a similar gift was vouchsafed to the "Sorrowful Star." With this, it seems superfluous to speak of the growth of the Society all the world over, the unprecedented sales of literature, the increase in the number of Lodge Halls, the rising of the Society in public esteem and official respect. In other years these things would have found due tabulation, but in this they seem insignificant."

In the *Theosophist* for March 1911, Mrs. Besant wrote:—

"It (Adyar) has been held worthy by the guardians of the Society to receive and train those chosen to take part in the great work of the near future—the coming of the world Teacher. Here last January, carefully guarded, lay the empty body of the young disciple taken away to Tibet for his mystic initiation and hither the new *initiate* returned to take up again his dwelling therein, to live under the guardianship of his elder brethren until the time is ripe for the ending of their trust."

And in the *Theosophist* for October 1911 she wrote:—

"The remarkable arrangement of planets on January 11, 1910 offered magnetic conditions of the most favourable and unusual kind and that was the date chosen for the Initiation of our loved Alcyone, of him who had been marked out, by the acceptance of his vow by Lord Buddha twenty-five centuries ago, as one of those to be used specially in the great work of teaching the world, of carrying the message of the wisdom to many lives to come. The reception of one of these elect individuals into the great White Brotherhood must always be a matter of deep moment to the world, which recks not of these inner happenings though its illumination depends thereupon. And to us who know their deep and far reaching importance and are privileged to behold them "with open face," they bring a joy which is not of these valleys, and shed a light which lightens all the obscuri-

ties of earth. Little wonder that a mighty blessing descended on that day upon a movement which is headed by the Ruler and the Hierophant of the next Root Race, and that in all parts it felt the rush of the current of the new and vigorous life."

Mrs. Besant has denied that she has ever spoken or written of Krishnamurthi as the Lord Maitreya, the Coming Christ, but her followers have done so, and they and others have understood that her eloquent descriptions of a World Teacher referred to "Alcyone" or to someone who would use the body of Alcyone.

Thus in the *Theosophist* for June 1911, Mrs. Besant wrote:—

"We await again the coming of its greatest Messenger from the great White Lodge, not one of the lesser Messengers, not one of the faithful and devoted disciples, not one of those who come because bidden by their Superiors to go out into the world, but one to whom none may say "Go" but whoever breathes "I come", the Supreme Teacher, the great Rishi, the Bodhisattava, the Lord Maitreya, the blessed Buddha yet to be. We who know something of the occult life, we who of our own knowledge bear witness that He lives upon the earth, are waiting for His coming, and already the steeps of the Himalayas are echoing to the footsteps that tread them to descend into the world of men. There He is standing, awaiting the striking of His hour, there He is standing with His eyes of love gazing on the world that rejected Him aforetime and perchance will again reject Him, there He is waiting for the fulness of the time to

ripen, till His Messengers have proclaimed His advent and to some extent have prepared the nations for His coming. Already among the peoples of the world there is the hush of expectation, already from many a pulpit in the Western world is ringing out the cry for a great spiritual teacher, who shall shape the religions of the world into one vast synthesis and spread true Brotherhood among men. Already the heart of the world is beating with hope, already the mind of the world is beginning to be alert, and before very many years have rolled over us, and have become the past, in a future that is near, reckoned by our mortal years, there shall, go up a cry from humanity to Him whose ears are never deaf, to Him whose heart is never closed against the world He loves. A cry shall go up "O Master of the great White Lodge, Lord of the religions of the world, come down again to the earth that needs Thee, and help the nations that are longing for Thy presence. Speak the Word of Peace, which shall make the peoples to cease from their quarrellings, speak the Word of Brotherhood which shall make the warring classes and castes to know themselves as one. Come with the might of Thy love, come in the splendour of Thy power, and save the world which is longing for Thy coming, Thou who art the Teacher alike of Gods and men."

Meanwhile Mr. Narayaniah continued to live at Adyar, and that he gave satisfaction and did valuable work on the estate is shown by a letter written by him at that time by Mrs. Besant.

Benares City, March 27, 1910.

MY DEAR SON,

I am very glad to have your careful account of Besant Garden. I enclose 500 Rs. for current expenses, noted by you. I approve of the deepening of the tank as commenced by you and the cistern. We shall have some rent also from the Bungalow, and perhaps from the other buildings, and that will help in the beginning. It is a very great help that you know about cultivation, and are throwing yourself into it so heartily. I do not mean that you should not finish the filling up for the tennis court. If you find yourself too much occupied, perhaps you could get Bro. Ranga Reddy, who is on the spot, to see to it for you.

Yours always,
(Sd.) ANNIE BESANT.

Towards the middle of April, however, there was a serious quarrel between Mr. Narayaniah and Mr. Leadbeter; and Mr. Narayaniah wished to leave Adyar with his sons. He was however pursuaded by Sir S. Subramania Iyer, the Vice-President of the Theosophical Society, to remain until the return of Mrs. Besant, who was then on tour. Very different versions of this quarrel were given by the plaintiff and the defendant in the trial that took place in the Madras High Court, during March and April 1913, and particulars concerning this matter will be deferred until the case is written about in a later chapter.

Mrs. Besant returned to Adyar in April 29, 1910, and remained there until September, of that year, when she went for a two months tour to Benares, Delhi, Amritsar, Lahore and Jammu, taking the two boys with her. She brought them back to Adyar in November 21, 1910, and they remained there until March 22, 1911, save for one month's visit to Burma, from January 12 to February 14. On the 22nd of March 1910 the boys accompanied Mrs. Besant to Benares, and thence to Europe, and with them went Mr. Arundale, the Principal of the Central Hindu College, who had taken six months leave of absence in order to act as their tutor.

During the Convention held at Adyar in December 1910 "Alcyone" was a good deal talked about. It was announced by Mrs. Besant that he had written a book "*At the Feet of the Master.*" In the January number of the *Theosophist* for 1911 Mrs Besant said :—

"A notable little book appeared in the last month of the dying year, entitled "*At the Feet of the Master.*" It contains the teachings on the "Qualifications for Discipleship" given by Master K. H. to His young pupil Krishnamurthi, (Alcyone) and reproduced by the latter, who wrote down, as nearly as he could remember, the very words used by the Master. The book is dedicated "*To Those who Knock,*" and thousands will draw from it inspiration and renewed vigour. Very seldom do such teachings find their way into the outer world. The little volume will find its place on the bookshelf of the aspirant with "*Light on the Path,*" and "*The Voice of the Silence.*"

At the Feet of the Master had a considerable sale, and ran into many editions, and Mrs. Besant used it for teaching the Esoteric Class at Adyar, and Mr. Leadbeter continued the same teaching after she went away.

At the Feet of the Master roused much comment in Madras, outside Theosophical circles, for Krishnamurthi had been known at the Mylapore boys' school as a dull boy and one who knew very little English. Some of his former school-fellows were allowed to visit him at Adyar, and they said that his room was full of flowers, and that European Theosophists did *puja* to him, when they came into his presence. Letters appeared about the book *At the Feet of the Master* in the newspapers, the most important letters being written by Dr. Nanjunda Row, of Mylapore, Madras, who had been the friend and doctor of the late Col. Olcott. It was well-known that the President Founder of the Theosophical Society had entertained for Dr. Row the highest regard and the deepest affection, and that when he was dying, he could not bear to have Dr. Row out of his room. Dr. Row had for many years been the doctor of the Adyar Theosophists, and that he should criticise Alcyone's book so unfavourably in the newspapers made a great impression on the local public.

Another thing that aroused local feeling was the treatment of the *Hindu* reporter at the Convention of 1910. For very many years reporters had been sent to the Adyar Conventions, and had been made welcome there by Col. Olcott. But at the Convention of 1910, the reporter of the *Hindu* was turned away by Mr.

Wadia, the Secretary, and the following statement concerning this occurrence appeared in the *Hindu* newspaper on the 27th of December, 1910.

" A lecture on " *The New Cycle* " was delivered by Mrs. Besant last evening in the Theosophical Hall, Adyar. Long before the appointed hour people had assembled in large numbers and were anxious to see the lecture commence. In accordance with their wishes, the lecture which was fixed for 4-30 P.M., actually commenced at 4 o'clock, and the doors were closed to all, even to out-press representative, who was there exactly at 4 namely half an hour before the appointed time, Mr. Wadia, the Secretary, informed our representative that no accommodation was available at that early time. It was however a surprise that accommodation was found for two European gentlemen a quarter of an hour after the commencement of the lecture. Considering the large number of the educated public that have to depend on newspaper reports, seats should have been, as in the past, reserved for Press representatives, until the fixed hour. On the other hand, seats intended for them were removed from the hall at the beginning of the lecture, and our representative's request for accommodation was not acceded to. We state these facts in order to explain to our readers the reason for the absence of an account in to-day's issue of Mrs. Besant's lecture delivered last evening."

CHAPTER V.

Alcyone—(*concluded.*)

Towards the close of April 1911, Mrs. Besant went to England, taking with her the two boys—Krishnamurthi and Nitya—and from May until September of that year, Mr. Narayaniah received many short letters from her, and also from his two sons. On May 18, Mrs. Besant wrote :—

MY DEAR SON,

We are now established in London and the dear boys are quite happy. Enclosed is a newspaper snapshot taken on our arrival in London, where we were met by a big crowd. It appeared in a number of papers, the boys have begun their regular lessons again. Mr. Arundale taking charge of them. One of our members has lent me a motor car, so we can get about very comfortably, and another has given us seats in one of the Government stands to see the Coronation Procession. We go to Oxford this day week and the boys are much looking forward to it.

Yours affectionately,
(Sd.) ANNIE BESANT.

May 26, Mrs. Besant wrote that she had taken the boys to Oxford and introduced them to their future University, and later on she wrote that the Oxford authority, who registers names, had said it was rather too soon to enter their names as yet. " Mr. Arundale is teaching

them the subjects needed at Oxford" wrote Mrs. Besant, "and they are studying Algebra and Shakespeare." "The boys cannot avoid wearing hats in England" she wrote to Mr. Narayaniah "the weather is not suitable for bare heads and they would catch cold. Also, with English dress, hats are customary." "Their letters at present are rather telegraphic than literary in style," said Mr. Besant. Certainly the letters written by "Alcyone" to his father in 1911, are very inferior in composition to the book *At the Feet of the Master*, which was published by the Theosophical Society in 1910.

The following little letter, written in 1911, is a fair specimen of the letters that he sent to his father at that time.

London, 8th September, 1911.

MY DEAR FATHER.

We have been photographed to-day and I hope they will be ready to bring them back. He took about 15 of us. I hope they will be alright. We have just returned from Esher. Yesterday we went to Maidenhead, there she gave a lecture, also A. F. Sinnet spoke. We are not going to Genoa as there is a bad cholera. Love to Sada and Siva Ram. Love to all.

Yours affectionately,

KRISHNA.

On the 9th of June, Mrs. Besant wrote to Mr. Narayaniah and said they had been staying at a country house in Scotland and the boys had learned to play cro-

quet. " Mr. Sinnet, who is quite friendly again, "wrote Mrs. Besant," has also heard from " the other side" that our Krishna will be a wonderful spiritual teacher." Later on she wrote :—" The boys certainly wear their threads, but they cannot be trained as Brahmins over here, where all the conditions of life differ from those in India. If they keep their Indian hearts that is all that matters. When Indian boys come to England their families always have to make up their minds to the change involved, and if they kept to Indian ways they would not gain the experience and the breadth entailed by living in the changed ways. What would be the use of incurring all the expense and trouble if the boys were to return unchanged ? You must accustom yourself to this idea. They have come here that they may learn how to deal with other people, and to be able to do their future work, which no man could do who only knew India."

On June, 22nd, Mrs. Besant wrote to Mr. Narayaniah and said that they had seen the Coronation Procession splendidly, as we had an invitation from the First Lord of the Admiralty. Tomorrow we go to the Royal Progress" she said " it is good that the boys should see these." And on June 29th she wrote :— " To-night we are all going to a reception to meet Mr. Balfour, the late Prime Minister, who is interested in Theosophy."

On July 1, she wrote that the boys were going every day to Sandow's and each had a private instructor ; and on July 21, she informed Mr. Narayaniah that his sons were learning to ride.

"All the silly talk in the *Hindu* seems very unimportant beside the large and successful work done here in London and elsewhere" wrote Mrs. Besant, on July 27. "It is just like a mosquito buzzing round. The interest in Theosophy here is quite wonderful, and it is spreading among the important people."

"Everything here is going very well" wrote Mrs. Besant, on the 2nd of August "The Theosophical Society is growing much in numbers and in public influence. The dear boys are very well and happy and are looking so strong and healthy. They enjoy the life here very much and all the strangeness of it has worn off, so that when they return for the University they will have no difficulty."

On the 18th of August, Mrs. Besant wrote to Mr. Narayaniah and said "You speak of a rumour that I am leaving the boys here. Rumours are not reliable. I took return tickets for all of us, and we leave Brindisi on the 2nd of September. And on the 8th of September she wrote, "Arrange as you think best about eating with the boys on our return. They will be back with you about a fortnight after you receive this. I hope they will look as well as they do now."

Mrs. Besant returned to Adyar with the boys in October 1911, and in December of that year she took them to the Annual Theosophical Convention at Benares. Of this Convention much was said in the trial that took place in the Madras High Court during March and April 1913. Krishnamurthi, who had learnt to play croquet and to ride in England, and to practice Sandow's exer-

cises, had also, it appears, developed into the head of a religious order, called "The Order of the Star in the East;" and some strange phenomena are said to have taken place in connection with this Order during the Convention held at Benares in December 1911.

Mrs. Besant wrote in the *Theosophist* for February 1912:—"The most remarkable of all the (Convention) meetings was quite *impromptu*. On December 28th, Mr. Arundale delivered a vivid and heartfelt lecture on The Order of the Star in the East. A large number of people joined, and it was suggested, in a casual way, that the new-comers would probably like to receive their certificates from the Head of the Order—Alcyone. A meeting was consequently called at 5 P.M., on the same day, and we strolled down to it, unexpectantly. I spoke a few opening words, as one of the Protectors of the Order, and then Alcyone stepped forward. It was arranged that Prof. Telang, the National Representative, should take each certificate from the member as he approached, handing it to the Head, who was to return it to the member. As the simple ceremony began, suddenly, the whole atmosphere changed, and great vibrations thrilled through the hall, the slender boyish figure took on a surprising majesty, the line of approaching members was struck by a common impluse, and one after another, old and young, men and women, Indians, Europeans and Americans, as they reached him, stretched out quivering hands to take their papers, and bowed their heads at his feet to receive his blessing, while he, serene and with an exquisite smile of welcome to each,

bent with hands outstretched in benediction, as simply and naturally as though naught extraordinary was happening. What the clairvoyants present saw, this is not the place to tell, but all who were present felt the might of the Power manifested in their midst, and knew that they were facing not a Brahmin youth merely, but one who, for the time, was the living temple of the Holiest. And we elder people, who had never dreamed of anything more remarkable than an ordinary giving of certificates, we sat gazing at the astounding spectacle, and as we left the hall we felt as in the ancient story "This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven." What shall be the ending of a mission thus begun and thus consecrated?"

The following account of the Order of the Star in the East was given by Mrs. Besant in the General Report of the thirty-sixth Anniversary and Convention of the Theosophical Society held at Benares in December 1911.

"The birth of the Order took place in Benares on the 11th of January, 1911, but, as was the case with its prototype 2,000 years ago, it was surrounded by dangers in its birth place and fled for a while into a symbolical Egypt, where the young child has flourished exceedingly. The Order is open equally to Theosophists and non-Theosophists, to all who believe in the near coming of a World Teacher, and numbers of people who hold this common hope are linking themselves together all over the world to prepare the way for His feet."

On the same occasion, Mr. Woodhouse, the General Secretary of The Order of the Star of the East read the following report :—

"Very rapid progress has to be recorded in the case of The Order of the Star in the East. It started in July last under its new name and with the revised Pledge card and Constitution, and it has by this time spread into many countries of the world, and in nineteen of these countries national representatives and organising secretaries have now been appointed by the Head of the Order (Alcyone). The countries referred to are England, India, Scotland, France, Italy, Germany, Russia, Hungary, Netherlands, Spain, Sweeden, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, United States, Australia, New Zealand, Burma and Java, and it is hoped before very long South America will be added to the list of organized Sections. All accounts seem to show that the work is proceeding with vigour and enthusiasm. Nearly every mail, for example for the two or three months before the regular officers for New Zealand had been appointed, brought us in a long list of new names for that country gathered by the indefatigable acting Secretary, Mr. Young, of Auckland, who has now been succeeded by Mr. David Burn, M.A. In England, too, the number had exceeded one thousand before the Protector of the Order left for India in September last, and there are sure to be large numbers of new admissions when, as we hear, she revisits that country in February next. In India there has been a steady flow of applications for admission ever since July last, a flow which we expect should gather

some impetus from the present Theosophical Society Convention. A second headquarter for India has now been established at Adyar, with Don Fabrizio Ruspoli, as Organising Secretary, and this will greatly help with dealing with the Southern India work."

"As regards literature, two pamphlets and certain leaflets have already been published and are available for applicants. One announcement of interest has to be made in this connection, and that is, that under date of January 1912, the anniversary of the foundation of the Order, the first number of a quarterly, entitled "*The Herald of the Star*" will appear, under the editorship of the Head of the Order, Mr. J. Krishnamurthi (Alcyone). This will be the Official Organ of the Order, and it is hoped all members of the Order will become subscribers to it." "We believe that a great work lies before this Order. May it prove worthy of its task, and acquit itself nobly in the preparation for the coming of the Lord?"

The ceremony that took place on the 28th of December, namely the handing of the certificates to the members of the Order by Krishnamurthi (Alcyone), roused much comment among Theosophists, and some of the staunchest supporters of Mrs. Besant expressed their strong disapproval, and Babu Bagavan Das, the Secretary of the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society, and the Secretary to the Board of Trustees of the Central Hindu College, wrote an article in which he pointed out that such an exhibition of emotionalism was extremely bad for young students.

At this Convention, held at Benares in December, 1911, Mr. Narayaniah spoke to Babu Bagavan Das for the first time about his sons, and begged the Secretary of the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society to talk to Mrs. Besant and persuade her to separate his boys for good and all from Mr. Leadbeter. It appears that Mrs. Besant desired to take Krishnamurthi and Nitya to Ootacamund or Kashmir for a second Initiation, and she had told Mr. Narayaniah that Mr. Leadbeter must go with the boys for that purpose.

Mr. Narayaniah had a conversation with Mrs. Besant on the 31st of December 1911, in which he says that he told her his boys should not go anywhere with Mr. Leadbeter, and that he even threatened to take action if she did not separate his sons from that person. Much more concerning this interview will be found in the evidence given by Mr. Narayaniah in the Madras High Court during the Case that he instituted there in March and April, 1913, for the recovery of his children from Mrs. Besant.

Mrs. Besant said in her written statement, in reply to Mr. Narayaniah's plaint, that in November 1911 she told the plaintiff that she had great hopes that his sons would both make a great step forward in the spring, and that then for three months they would have to remain secluded with Mr. Leadbeter and herself. She denied that the plaintiff objected, on the contrary, said Mrs. Besant, he expressed great pleasure at the prospect. No question as to not going to Ootacamund arose until January 1912, and then in an entirely different connection.

Mrs. Besant admitted that Mr. Narayaniah came to her at Benares on December 31, 1911 or January 1, 1912, and without giving any reasons requested that Mr. Leadbeter should be separated from the boys. And she declined to comply with the request. She denied that she had ever before refused to adopt the course requested, and denied that she then stated that the boys and Leadbeter had lived together for several lives and he was an Arhat, or saint, who was "on the verge of divinity." She denied that the plaintiff stated that he would not accept any such position or that he threatened to take action. As he was leaving Benares, she desired Krishnamurthi to go with his brother to say good-bye to their father, and he returned saying that his father had left. Mr. Narayaniah returned to Adyar after the Convention, and on the 6th of January, 1912, he sent the following letter to Mrs. Besant, who was then at Benares.

Adyar, 6th January 1912.

To Mrs. Annie Besant.

RESPECTED AND DEAR MOTHER,

In continuation of my conversation with you in Benares on the 31st ultimo, just before my departure to this place, I respectfully beg to inform you that after deep consideration, I have come to the following conclusion on the facts here mentioned and I earnestly hope and trust that you will give your best consideration and render me the relief I seek.

(Here Mr. Narayaniah relates what he says that

he saw in Mr. Leadbeter's room, and he says, also, that similar things were seen at Adyar by another person and reported to several persons living in the compound.)

He goes on to say :—

"What I personally witnessed I have brought to your notice on several occasions, and told you in no doubtful terms that Mr. Leadbeter has the lowest kind of sexual appetite, and that he has his own ways of gratifying it. What the other person has seen was, I am told, also brought to your notice, by some at least of those to whom the person had spoken. I therefore requested you on many an occasion to separate my boys from him. You were kind enough to comply with my requests, but only half and half, still giving room to Mr. Leadbeater to continue his own dirty practices.

On the last occasion, namely when 1 spoke to you in Benares, you plainly told me that you could not separate the boys from that man.

My own impression is that Mr. Leadbeter is a thoroughly undesirable character to be in charge of my boys, not even to temporarily associate with them.

I therefore finally request you to bring about a complete and final separation of my boys from that man and assure me in writing that you will not permit him to influence in any manner either by day or night my boys, and that you will never allow that man even to meet my boys, even occasionally, or carry on any sort of correspondence with the boys, so that the boys may not come under his influence to the least extent. If you fail to comply with my request, I regret I shall have

recourse to law to find my remedy, and I very respectfully submit that this is no threat of mine. But I am resolved to do so, irrespective of consequences, for though I may fail in my attempt, I shall have the satisfaction that I have done my very best in discharging my duty and responsibility towards my sons, which I cannot shake off quite so easily as you seem to imagine. The Lords of Karma having thought it best to bring these two boys as my sons in this incarnation I, as their father, feel it my duty to save them from this depradation, although it is a great pity their bad Karma should have brought them near this man.

Perhaps Mr. Leadbeter may have the same supposed occult explanation for these actions towards my sons as he put forward in connection with the charges brought by the parents against him on the previous well-known occasion. You are aware that eventually the explanation was not accepted, even by Theosophists, as justifying his action, and that he solemnly promised on that occasion never to repeat the practice again. What came to my knowledge, as already stated above, is a plain breach of his promise, as you know, his action is not merely morally reprehensible, but is a heinous offense, punishable by Criminal Law. I feel sure, therefore, that you will not any longer allow any such crime to be committed by that man on a tender and fair child of mine, committed to your care, solely for the purpose of his education and moral training in life.

As I have already stated, it is necessary for me to repeat that my determination to have recourse to the

law is unalterable, and this appeal of mine to you is made to you as a final one and in the hope that your own devotion to truth, righteousness and the cause of Theosophy, of which you are such a noble apostle, may not suffer by my being driven to have recourse to the law of the land.

Surely none can feel and understand the pangs of a parent better than you, who are an embodiment of love to all? I conclude with the observation that in resorting to my remedy at other hands than yours, as I now do, I know that not only my name, but also the names of my beloved children, would become the subject of the most irreparable notoriety and disgrace.

Even this sacrifice I am resolved to make in order that I may save those children from what I am convinced would be their ruin, if they continue to remain in that man's hands already a well-known old offender.

May the Lords of compassion make you have compassion on me.

I beg to remain,

Respected and dear mother,

Your most dutiful and obedient son as ever,

(Sd.) G. Narayaniah.

On the 13th of January, 1912, Mrs. Besant sent the following letter to Mr. Narayaniah from Benares.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,
SHANTHI KUNJA, BENARES CITY,
President's Office, January 13, 1912.

DEAR SIR,

At our interview here, before you left for Adyar, when I said it might be better for me to take Krishnamurthi and Nityananda to Europe with me, you stated that would quite satisfy you. Despite the unnecessary expense, for the sake of peace, I have taken tickets for them, and they accompany me. As I shall only be in Adyar for a fortnight, I am leaving them here, in charge of the Principal of the College, to continue the studies I had arranged for them, and they will meet me in Bombay.

Sincerely,
(Sd.) ANNIE BESANT.

On the 19th of January, Mrs. Besant arrived at Adyar, and on the same day Mr. Narayaniah was asked to meet her in the presence of five friends. Accounts of this interview vary, Mrs. Besant and her friends saying one thing and Mr. Narayaniah saying another. Finally Mr. Narayaniah gave his consent to the removal of his sons to England, and Mrs. Besant left Madras for Benares on rhe 26th of January, 1912, and sailed from Bombay on the 3rd of February, taking the boys with her.

On the 7th of February Mr. Narayaniah wrote to Mrs. Besant; but she said in the Madras High Court that she had no recollection of having received his letter.

Adyar, 7th February, 1912.

To Mrs. Annie Besant.

RESPECTED AND DEAR MOTHER,

My prostrations to you. Brother B. Ranga Reddi showed me the deposition of your servant Lakshman recorded by you at Benares on the 29th of January last.

(The following is the true translation of Lakshman's statement.)

SHANTI KUNJA,
29th January, 1912.

It is not true, as Mr. Narayaniah has stated, that I looked through the blinds of Mr. Leadbeter's bungalow at Adyar, and saw anything improper.

I ran into the bathroom one day to get a towel, and saw Mr. Leadbeter there half-dressed, and ran out again, only seeing Mr. Leadbeter standing with one knee on a chair and Krishnajee standing in front of him, Mr. Leadbeter dressing his hair. I saw nothing more.

(Sd.) LAKSHMAN.

Witnessed: Annie Besant
Iqbal Narain Gurtu.

After I glanced through it, I turned to brother Ranga Reddi, and asked him "What do you say?" He at once replied "What is the good of that? I was present when Lakshman was speaking angrily at the time and

saying that Mr. C. W. Leadbeter was a bad man, he has seen him do something very improper."

I very respectfully submit that I never to this moment spoke to Lakshman on this matter, nor did he say anything to me. Hence the statement in the deposition recorded by you "It is not true as Mr. Narayaniah has stated etc.," is not correct. I never said anything as told me by Lakshman. My information about what Lakshman saw and said was from brothers Subbiah, Wadia, Ranga Reddi, Schwatz and Van Manen. To test the veracity of Lakshman's statement, the above named friends have to be examined, if you desire to know the truth. These friends heard him immediately after the incident as seen by Lakshman. Hence their statement (and not that of Lakshman, made two years afterwards before his own employer, under what circumstances I cannot say, which is not only not admissible legally as evidence, but even according to common sense), can be of any use. These friends are respectable and are not likely to say anything untrue, whatever the consequences may be. But Lakshman, not high socially, and only a menial servant, knows his present position under you, and your attitude towards Mr. Leadbeter, and could not have, therefore, naturally, judging by the statement made by him, deposed in any other manner than he has done.

If he is placed in the presence of the above-named friends, and cross-examined face to face as to what he told them immediately after the incident, probably only a few hours after, then something nearer the truth can be ascertained. Mr. Wadia told me that he was inform-

ed by Lakshman that he saw Mr. Leadbeter commit, * * * and Mr. Van Manen that he was informed of the same by Mr. Wadia. These two spoke to me even the other day, namely about two or three days before your return from Benares in January last, and said that Lakshman actually said that very word. Mr. Schwatz told me about a year ago, when questioned by me, that Lakshman said that he saw Mr. Leadbeter do something very nasty. Mr. G. Subbiah Chetty said to me almost the same as Mr. Wadia.

Thus you will be pleased to see that what I knew of what Lakshman had seen was only from those friends. I again tell you that I never till now spoke to the man Lakshman himself. I write this in such length, because the deposition of Lakshman referred to above, begins with the statement, "It is not true, as Mr. Narayaniah stated." I wish to point out that Narayaniah has not stated anything of the kind, and that he, Narayaniah, has not personally heard anything from Lakshman, and that what Lakshman now says is not to be credited at all, in the face of what these respectable friends have directly heard from himself at the time.

I should not have said anything about this matter, but that the deposition was, as I am informed, ordered to be shown to me. I have not heard from the boys. Myself and my other two sons are very anxious to know from you and from them that they are doing well.

With sincere and respectful prostrations,

I am your ever dutiful son,

(Sd.) G. Narayaniah.

On the 15th of February, Mr. Narayaniah wrote again to Mrs. Besant.

Adyar, 15th February, 1912.

RESPECTED AND DEAR MOTHER,

My prostrations to you. I believe my last two letters, one addressed to Benares and the other to London, will have reached you.

I regret very much to have to write to you again regarding the deposition recorded by you from Lakshman in Benares. Brothers B. Ranga Reddy and Subbiah tell me now that they were informed by Lakshman at the time of the incident that what he saw was upstairs in your room during your absence. This makes the case worse for Mr. Leadbeter. What made Mr. Leadbeter go to your room with the boy and dress his hair there? Why was he half dressed, as is alleged, in your room? Why did he go half dressed from his river bungalow all the way upstairs? No, this cannot be. * * *

He would be unobserved there, and probably did not expect Lakshman to enter the room. In his, Mr. Leadbeter's room, there were so many chances of his being observed by others, as he really was by myself on two occasions. Thus I am quite convinced, so far as I am myself concerned, that the crime has been committed. I believe that the statememt made at the time by Lakshman to the important people in the compound was an accurate statement of the facts observed by him. He had no motive whatever to speak a falsehood. He was new to the gentleman (Mr. Leadbeter) and the latter had given him (Lakshman) no cause of offence to

concoct such a story against him. Lakshman is an innocent and ignorant rustic and would not have spoken a falsehood unless it was with a motive. What the motive could have been I could not guess. Mr. Leadbeter had to find a motive in Lakshman for having made this unjust accusation against him. For the statement now made before you by him, there was clearly a definite motive, and therefore he made a false statement.

I should very frankly tell you that I feel very sorry that you caused the statement of Lakshman to be circulated among so many in the compound here, with the result that I am considered a liar. I suppose that you and these people here forget that that statement has so many defects in it and is only a one-sided story. Viewed legally that statement of Lakshman's is worth nothing. As I feel that I should not speak about it to others, I am constrained to be quiet, though I had foolishly spoken about it to some in my excitement. (Here follows a reference to the Commissioner and Collector of Benares).

Mr. Narayaniah goes on to say:—

Subbiah also tells me that you suspect me of having gone out of the Society at Benares and spoken to outsiders about this matter before I left Benares. I can only swear to you that I did nothing of the kind, and that I spoke to no others than those two, Mr. Bhagavan Das and Mr. S. Van Hook. If I had gone out, there is nothing to prevent me from telling you so, I can assure you that I spoke to no others in Benares than those two mentioned above. If in spite of this you are not

pleased to exonerate me, I have only to thank my ill luck. I have not yet heard from my boys and I am very sorry for this. Please tell them to write and oblige. To be angry with me and continue to be so does not become a mother and a teacher.

With respectful prostrations,
I am your ever dutiful son,
(Sd.) G. NARAYANIAH.

Some time after these letters had been sent, Mr. Narayaniah received the following letter from Mrs. Besant, which was dated the 7th of February, the very day on which Mr. Narayaniah had sent to Mrs. Besant his first letter.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE,
Indian Ocean, February 7th, 1912.

DEAR SIR,

You will, I think, feel with me that ordinary decency requires that after your late proceedings you should leave Adyar. One cannot have plots carried on against one in one's own house, and one's servants tampered with to make false statements. Proceedings of the kind in which you have been indulging should at least not be planned and carried out inside one's home circle.

For Krishna's sake, to save your spotless son from the deadly injury planned by you, I yielded for the moment. You blazoned abroad at Adyar and Benares a statement which had it been true any decent father

would rather have died than make. Had it been true you would not have legally entrusted me with the guardianship of your sons, knowing that it meant close association with Mr. Leadbeter, but you would have left Adyar at once, taking your sons away. That is the view taken by the respectable men who have heard your story, as it would be the view of any court of law. To trump up such a story, two years after its supposed occurrence, is to show its falsity. My servant, whom you thought you had made your tool, has confessed that your statement about him was false, and that he had seen nothing objectionable; I have his written statement, signed and properly witnessed.

If you try to set aside the deed, I am prepared to prove that when the children were taken over, they were half-starved, beaten, dirty, their lives made a veritable hell, they lived in terror of you and would run away when they heard your step. Now they are frank, fearless, healthy gentlemen, though Nitya will hardly recover the stunting effects of under-feeding in his childhood. Of 13 children but 5 survive, an eloquent testimony as to their home surroundings. While they have been with me, I have tried to awaken and foster affection for yourself, though as you yourself told me, you did not care for them until you saw how affectionate they had become to us. I have been patient with your varying moods, and have done all I could to consider your feelings and your wishes, telling you my plans for them, and even my hopes for their future. But this last outrage has exhausted my patience and I do not wish to have any-

thing more to do with you. I had intended to settle the boys in England in April 1913, to prepare for Oxford. Now, in consequence of your behaviour, I shall settle them there this year, before I return to India, and they will not come back to India until they are men, able to protect themselves against you. Your statement that you had no objection to my taking them to Europe has been written down and witnessed by the six people before whom you made it.

When you recover from your madness, you will realise what you have done, how you have thrown away a home where you might have been happy, and the affection of sons of whom you might have been justly proud. I say nothing of your conduct to me, for whom you have professed respect and affection. Kindly hand over all your E. S. papers, books and pictures to Mr. Seetharama Sastry, whom I appoint my agent to receive them. All E. S. Registers, records and official papers, are to be handed over to Mr. T. Ramachendra Row, Corresponding Secretary. The room will remain the E. S. Office.

I remain, with sincere regret,

Your rejected helper,

(Sd.) Annie Besant.

On receipt of this letter Mr. Narayaniah was for a time struck dumb, for he had believed Mrs. Besant to be more than human, he had, in fact, given to her the homage that most people pay only to the Supreme Being.

He received no letters from his boys, but Mrs. Besant sent the following explanation of their silence to his eldest son, Sivaram.

Italy, May 5th, 1912.

MY DEAR SIVARAM,

I explained to your father last autumn that your two brothers had a very serious piece of work to do this spring, which should occupy some three or four months. During this time they are not writing letters. Mr. Arundale answers any that come for Krishna. So please do not mind waiting during this time. Krishna's love for you and little Sada is always the same, he does not, and will not forget you.

Both your brothers are in very good health and are doing well in every way.

Yours ever,

(Sd.) ANNIE BESANT.

Very much love.

(Sd.) KRISHNA.

In the *Theosophist* for July 1912, the following notice by Mrs. Besant appeared:—

"I am working hard—hidden away in a village of the Kingdom of Italy—at the promised book "Man: How, Whence, Whither." Two months should see it finished, so far as writing is concerned, and already the Vasanta Press has received a consignment of the M. S. It is difficult, but pleasant work."

Mr. Narayaniah's suspicions being confirmed as regards the boys being once more with Mr. Leadbeter, he

sent the following letter to Mrs. Besant:—

11th July, 1912.

To Mrs. Annie Besant.

DEAR MADAM,

Judging from what has taken place during the last thirty months, I consider it extremely undesirable and improper that I should any longer allow my two sons, Krishnamurthi and Nityananda, to continue under your guardianship, as it will be to their great disadvantage in every respect. I therefore hereby cancel the letter by which I constituted you the guardian of my above-named two sons in the beginning of February 1910. The training that you have been giving to them is not only seriously detrimental to the progress of their education and the development of their general character, but their moral character is being undermined by your allowing them, in spite of my repeated protests, to be associated with that disreputable character Mr. Leadbeter, and his worthy disciples and sattelites. I therefore request you to produce and hand over my two sons to me at No. 118, Big Street, Triplicane, Madras. S. at your earliest possible convenience, at any rate not later than the 31st of August, failing which I shall be constrained to take legal steps to obtain my sons from you.

Yours truly,

(Sd.) G. NARAYANIAH,

Father of J. K. and J. N.

Dr. M. C. Nanjunda Row.

To this letter Mrs. Besant sent the following reply:—

SIR,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated July 11th, 1912.

Sincerely,
(Sd.) ANNIE BESANT.

In the autumn of 1912 Mrs. Besant returned to India and went to Benares. Thence in October she proceeded to Adyar, whither she was followed by Mr. Leadbeter. She said that she had left the boys under the protection of Mrs. Bright in London and that Mr. Jinarajadasa was acting as their tutor.

In October 1912 Mr. Narayaniah filed a plaint in the Chingleput Court, and this was afterwards moved, together with Mrs. Besant's written statement, to the High Court, Madras.

CHAPTER VI.

Mrs. Besant's original Statement.

On the 3rd of December 1912, Mr. C. P. Napier applied on behalf of *The Hindu* newspaper, in the Madras High Court, before Mr. Justice Bakewell, that certain statements in Mrs. Besant's written reply to Mr. Narayaniah's plaint might be expunged as being irrelevant and scandalous. Counsel said in that in paragraphs 11 and 29 she had made allegations against

The Hindu that were absolutely foreign to the subject matter of the suit.

A similar application on behalf of Dr. Nanjunda Row was made by Mr. K. Srinivasa Iyengar.

The following are paragraphs II and 29 of Mrs. Besant's original written statement.

"The defendant states that during the boys stay in Europe, she afforded them every opportunity of improvement, they travelled in Scotland and elsewhere, associated with people of high rank, learned to ride, attended the Sandow Institute for Physical training at a cost of £40, and generally were given every advantage. The defendant entered their names at Oxford University and arranged that they should reside permanently in England from the spring of 1913, to prepare for Oxford, and that Mr. Arundale should resign the Principalship of the Central Hindu College in 1913 to take charge of them until they should leave the University. The defendant and the others left England on September 22nd, 1911, and reached Adyar on October, 7. The defendant left Adyar again on December 17th. No difficulty arose with the plaintiff, who seemed very pleased with his sons' progress, but who several times expressed his regret that the defendant had not left the boys in England permanently, so as to deliver him from the constant pressure to remove them from her care, and to save him from the persecution to which he was subjected by *The Hindu* newspaper, and Dr. Nanjunda Row, for having made the defendant guardian of his sons. He several times complained with tears of this

pressure, and said he was afraid of it. The defendant said that she had arranged for her wards to stay in England from 1913 onwards, but he reiterated his wish that they had not returned and that she would take them back as soon as she could and leave them there. He was very friendly with the defendant, professing great devotion to her, and much gratitude."

The defendant submits that this suit has been undertaken from political motives and personal malice, in order to injure the defendant, in persuance of a settled policy to destroy her life or reputation because she has held back the student population of India from participation in the plots of the Extremists, and has sought to inspire them with loyalty to the Empire. Since she interfered to put an end to the secret drilling of boys and the collection of arms in Maharashtra during the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon, she has been marked out as an obstacle to the propaganda of violence among students, and has had her life threatened both in India and Europe. The persistent and malignant campaign against both herself and the Theosophical Society, known to be a body of studious, law-abiding and respectable men and women, that has been carried on in the columns of *The Hindu* newspaper, instigated and supported by Mrs. Catherine Tingley from America, and led by Dr. Nanjunda Row since January 1911, shows deliberate malice and utter disregard of truth, the libels are translated into many languages and circulated over Europe at great expense, without printer's name, the law in Europe not permitting the

circulation of filth such as is printed here. All this has only the ruin of the defendant and the Society for its aim. The latest move is to use the plaintiff, weakened in body and mind, as the tool of this nefarious movement of Extremist and Theological persecution, and he has been driven into it against his will and after long resistance. The defendant asks that the boys may be protected by the Court from the renewal of influences that would make them hate the English, instead of loving and trusting them as they now do, and which would turn them into bad citizens."

The affidavit in support of the application by Mr. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, the editor of *The Hindu*, said among other things :—

"I have not known the plaintiff (G. Narayaniah) or his sons whose guardianship forms the subject-matter of this suit, and I have never had any written or oral communication with them. I saw the plaintiff for the first time in October 1912.

I have no knowledge of the allegations made in the plaint and I never instigated the plaintiff to file the suit against the defendant as is alleged by her. The allegation in paragraph 11 of the written statement that the plaintiff was subjected to persecution from *The Hindu* newspaper in October 1911, or thereabouts, for having made the defendant guardian of his sons, is unfounded and false. The plaintiff could not have made the statement alleged by the defendant as I had no acquaintance with him whatsoever, until more than a year afterwards and I had no communication with

him and no sort of influence over him. If the plaintiff had made such a statement as is alleged by the defendant it was wholly unfounded and untrue.

The allegations, insinuations and imputations made by Mrs. Besant against *The Hindu* newspaper in paragraph 29 of her written statement are false, malevolent and irrelevant. The said paragraph contains the most damaging allegations and reflections and serious imputations upon *The Hindu*, which is an organ of public opinion of acknowledged influence and popularity. The said allegations, imputations and reflections are absolutely unfounded and untrue. They have no bearing whatever upon the issue involved in the suit, and have been inserted by the defendant in her written statement from unworthy motives.

It is untrue that a persistent and malignant campaign against Mrs. Besant and the Theosophical Society has been carried on in the columns of *The Hindu* newspaper and supported by Mrs. Catherine Tingley of America. It is untrue as is suggested that *The Hindu* has used the plaintiff as "the tool of this nefarious movement of Extremist and Theological persecution."

I state that all such criticisms as have appeared in *The Hindu* against Mrs. Besant have been in respect of her utterances and acts as President of the Theosophical Society and they were legitimate comments on a matter of public interest and for the public good, and that such criticisms were only those which were shared by a large class of thinking and honest-minded people.

I state that I have no personal animus against Mrs. Besant or against the Theosophical Society as such."

Finally the affidavit declared that the allegations and imputations complained of were scandalous, irrelevant and malicious and were an abuse of the process of the Court.

In her counter-affidavit Mrs. Besant denied that she imputed any direct personal connection of the Editor of *The Hindu* with the plaintiff, and declared that there was a long course of persistent and ill-natured attacks in *The Hindu* against herself and the Theosophical Society.

His Lordship asked how Mr. Napier was entitled to intervene in an action to which he was not a party, and he said that he would hear the Plaintiff, who had himself made a similar application, as he had not decided whether Mr. Napier had a right to intervene. His Lordship said that he would hear Mr. Ramaswamy Aiyar, for the plaintiff, before proceeding further.

Mr. Ramaswamy Aiyar, in the course of his argument on behalf of the plaintiff, pointed out that the suit was a simple one, brought by a parent for the restoration of the custody of his children, based on his inherent rights, and on the ground of the unfitness of the defendant to be in charge of the minor boys. What was the defence? It was that the suit was the result of a conspiracy to destroy her life or reputation, and that it was due to a plot that had its origin in the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon and the Partition of Bengal, and was

connected with plots of Extremists to subvert the British Empire. It was also connected with a certain Mrs. Tingley in America, and with Dr. Nanjunda Row, and *The Hindu* newspaper. A more meaningless defence could not be set up. The plaintiff relied primarily on his rights as a parent, and on certain specific actions on the part of Mrs. Besant in consequence of which he revoked the authority he had given her, which he had a right to do. It was quite immaterial and irrelevant as to who instigated the plaintiff or why, though the plaintiff denied any such thing totally. Pleadings did not exist for the purpose of making attacks against persons unconnected with suits. The statement obscured the main issue by making attacks against persons unconnected with the suit, making references to Lord Curzon's policy, the conduct of student population and plots against the stability of the British Government. If such pleadings were allowed by a Court, a Royal Commission would have to be appointed to enquire into the matters. Counsel then referred to paragraph 11 of the written statement which said that the plaintiff had several times expressed his regret that the defendant had not left the boys in England permanently, so as to deliver him from the constant pressure put upon him to remove them from her care and save him from the persecution to which he was subjected by *The Hindu* newspaper and Dr. Nanjunda Row, and that he had several times complained, with tears, to the plaintiff of this personal pressure and persecution. Counsel pointed out that in the counter-affidavit filed in the

applications at that time before the Court, Mrs. Besant sought to explain away these statements by saying that the pressure and persecution arose merely from the publications themselves. Nobody, said the learned Counsel, who is acquainted with the English language can consider such a statement a candid one.

Counsel then read various paragraphs in the plaint showing the main bases for the institution of the suit, and afterwards he read the written statement of Mrs. Besant, in which he pointed out the various irrelevant, prolix, argumentative and scandalous references.

His Lordship said:—

"The plaint is not beyond reproach either."

Mr. Ramaswamy Iyer promised that he would expunge certain evidentiary matter, and he added that the plaintiff who was a retired Tahsildar, had put in an affidavit to say that he had never concerned himself with any political movement.

Mr. Barton admitted that a great deal of Mrs. Besant's written statement consisted of what was really evidence, and that a portion was argumentative, but he said that the position of Mrs. Besant when preparing the statement was peculiar. His Lordship would agree that the plaint was by no means a production of which the prosecution need be proud. It became necessary for Mrs. Besant to make a full statement as she had so many allegations to deal with. There was nothing, said the learned Counsel, in the statement of a scandalous character.

His Lordship said:—

"The whole of paragraph 29 is scandalous."

Mr. Barton submitted that his case was that the *Hindu* and Dr. Nanjunda Row were really at the bottom of the case. If it had not been for them that case would not have been brought at all. It was not a *bonâ fide* case, and the plaintiff was not the aggrieved party. The real parties to the transaction were the *Hindu* and Dr. Nanjunda Row. If that was true, surely all that was mentioned in paragraph 29 was relevant. If, as the learned Counsel maintained, the suit had been undertaken from political motives, and personal matter, in order to injure the defendant, was it not necessary for him to allege it in the written statement? Counsel maintained that this was a suit brought not to recover the boys, but from political motives, the plaintiff had filed an affidavit in which he admitted having received help from Dr. Nanjunda Row in this case. How could it be said that the allegations were scandalous if that were the case? The allegations would have a very important bearing on the case, and it was impossible at that stage, when there were so many allegations and denials, it would not be safe or right to pre-judge the matter. If at the end, His Lordship found the allegations to be untrue, he would punish his client by mulcting her in costs. The only question was, if they were true, then were they not relevant? He submitted that they were true. He had letters from Dr. Nanjunda Row to people in England asking them to take action and to finance the present

suit. *The Hindu* and Dr. Nanjunda Row were the real instigators of this action and he had ample evidence to prove it. If the written statement was prolix, it was very largely due to the fact that the plaint was prolix, and to the fact that the plaint was published in the newspapers before the written statement.

Mr. Napier asked if anything in the plaint could be pointed out to which paragraph 29 of the written statement was a reply? And he asked what all that was said in that paragraph had to do with the man who was trying to get back his sons?

Mr. Barton remarked "My learned friend has no *locus standi* in this case, and he does not understand it."

Mr. Ramaswamy Iyer submitted that His Lordship ought not to take notice of the publication of the plaint in the newspapers in considering the sufficiency of the pleadings.

His Lordship then passed the following order.

Order.

This is a suit by a father to recover the custody of his sons from the defendant, who has had the care of them for some years. The children are admitted to be boys aged 17 and 14 years. And therefore the main issue in the case will be as to what course is best adapted to their welfare, and other issues may arise as to the fitness or unfitness of the parties to take custody of the children. The defendant has imputed various motives to the plaintiff for the institution of this suit, which I think, are altogether irrelevant, since they do not go to the character of the plaintiff in his capacity

as parent of the children. Her written statement cannot by any stretch of language be described as pleadings, it is verbose, prolix, argumentative and irrelevant, and in one of the paragraphs, at least, namely paragraph 29, it is highly scandalous, and consists largely of evidence. Mr. Napier, on behalf of the editor and proprietor of *The Hindu* newspaper, has asked leave to intervene as one of the parties referred to in paragraphs 11 and 29, and has applied that these paragraphs may be struck out, as scandalous and irrelevant and not fit to form part of the record of the Court. I doubt very much whether a third party should be permitted to intervene in a suit for this reason, and I am of opinion that in any case the reflections on his client contained in the statement are not sufficiently grave to justify his intervention. The plaint is also prolix and contains many matters of evidence, but the statements in the defendant's written statement are not caused by its bad pleadings. The written statement is ordered to be struck out, since it is impossible to separate the objectionable portions from the necessary assertions. The defendant is ordered to pay the plaintiff's taxed costs of this application occasioned by the filing of this written statement. The plaintiff will have leave to amend the plaint by striking out the matters of evidence and argument. The amendment should be made and copies thereof given to the defendant within seven days, and the written statement should be filed by the defendant in two weeks time. Mr. Napier's application is dismissed without costs.

Mr. Barton submitted to His Lordship that as the editor of *The Hindu* and Dr. Nanjunda Row had no right to intervene, his costs in their applications should be ordered to be paid.

His Lordship declined to do this, saying that the defendant had no business to take advantage of the written statement to throw missiles in all directions, and that if he had been quite sure that Mr. Napier had a right to intervene he would have ordered his costs to be paid by the defendant.

The application of Dr. Nanjunda Row, (which was not taken) was also dismissed without costs.

The amended plaint and the fresh written statement will be found in the two following chapters.

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Narayaniah's Plaint.

In the High Court of Judicature at Madras.

G. Narayaniah ... ... Plaintiff.

Vs.

Mrs. Annie Besant.... ... Defendant.

The plaintiff above named begs to state as follows :-

1. G. Narayaniah, the plaintiff, is a Government pensioner, living at 118, Big Street, Triplicane, Madras. His address for service of all notices and processes is through his Vakils at Nos. 37 & 38, Vakils Chambers, High Court, Madras.

2. Mrs. Annie Besant is the President of the Theosophical Society and has her permanent place of residence at Adyar, near Madras, at the head-quarters of the said Society.

3. The plaintiff who had been a member of the Theosophical Society prior to his retirement, was at the beginning of 1909 invited by the defendant to take up his residence at Adyar and do the work of Assistant Corresponding Secretary of the Esoteric Section. The plaintiff had at that time very great respect and veneration for the defendant whom he regarded as his spiritual preceptress, and whom he credited with more than human attributes. The plaintiff accordingly took up his abode at Adyar, along with his second and third sons, J. Krishnamurthi and J. Nityanandam, who are respectively 17 and 14. The boys were then receiving their education in the Pennathur Subramaniam High School at Mylapore, Madras. In or about December, 1909, the defendant who had been frequently on tour, in connection with her Theosophical work, returned to India and promised to help and undertake the future education of the boys. Accordingly the plaintiff stopped the boys from school altogether and kept them with him at Adyar. About the beginning of 1910 the defendant requested the plaintiff to give her a letter constituting her as the guardian of the boys, and after some persuasion, both on the part of the defendant and Sir S. Subramania Iyer, for whom the plaintiff had great respect, the plaintiff gave the letter.

4. In or about the latter part of March 1910, the

plaintiff discovered that his son J. Krishnamurthi was being led into improper and dangerous practices by Mr. Leadbeter, who exercised considerable influence over the defendant. The plaintiff complained to defendant about the conduct of Mr. Leadbeter, and she promised to keep the boys away from him. In spite of this they were again being allowed to associate with the said Mr. Leadbeter, and it was about this time that he heard from Theosophist friends that one Lakshman, a personal attendant of the defendant, had seen Mr. Leadbeter and J. Krishnamurthi in the defendant's room, engaged in * * * *

5. On a further remonstrance by the plaintiff, defendant promised to take the boys away to England, and accordingly she left India for England about the end of March, 1911 and returned to India only in the beginning of October, 1911, during which time, so far as the plaintiff was aware, the boys were kept away from associating with the said Mr. Leadbeter.

6. In or about November, 1911, the defendant told the plaintiff that the boys were making rapid spiritual progress, and were approaching initiation by the Masters, a set of superhuman beings, living on the slopes of the Himalayas and believed in by Theosophists. She thereupon proposed to keep the boys with Mr. Leadbeter at Ootacamund, preparatory to their initiation. On the plaintiff's objection the boys were not taken to Ootacamund. The plaintiff met the defendant at Benares in December, 1911, and insisted on an absolute separation of the boys from Mr. Leadbeter. But for the

first time the defendant refused to adopt any such course, and alleged that the boys and Mr. Leadbeter had lived together for several lives past, and that Mr. Leadbeter was an Arhat or saint "who is on the verge of divinity." The plaintiff stated that he could not accept any such position, and that unless the separation took place he would take action immediately.

7. The plaintiff returned from Benares to Adyar, and there, on or about January 19th, 1912, the defendant, in the presence of certain members of the Theosophical Society, sent for plaintiff and asked what he wanted to be done in respect of the boys. The plaintiff only demanded that there should be absolute separation from the said Mr. Leadbeter. She agreed to this and asked the plaintiff whether he had any objection to the boys being taken to England. The plaintiff asserted, as the defendant had alleged that she would be returning to India in April or May. In spite of her undertaking to keep the boys separated from Mr. Leadbeter, the plaintiff has reason to believe that after reaching England, she took the boys to Mr. Leadbeter in Italy, thus breaking her promises. The plaintiff submits that having regard to the habits, character and antecedents of Mr. Leadbeter, it is extremely undesirable that the boys should be allowed to associate with him or that he should be allowed to have access to them.

8. No sooner had the defendant sailed from Bombay than she wrote a letter to the plaintiff, dated 7th February, 1912, from on board the steamer, in which for the first time she set up that the plaintiff had been

ill-treating his children. The plaintiff states that this is wholly false. The defendant has further threatened that she will keep the boys in England until their majority. Accordingly the defendant has now returned to India, and has purposely refrained from bringing the boys with her to India, in order to hamper the plaintiff in his efforts to recover the boys.

9. The plaintiff states that all along the defendant has been aware of the practices of Mr. Leadbeter, and that after she reached England, she took the boys to Mr. Leadbeter in Italy. The plaintiff submits that the conduct of the defendant as aforesaid renders her totally unfit to be in charge of the boys. The plaintiff further submits that the defendant has been stating that the first boy, who is named Alcyone by the defendant, is or is going to be Lord Christ, and sometimes that he is or is going to be Lord Maitreya, and she has induced a number of persons to believe in this theory, with the result that the boy is deified and that a number of respectable persons prostrate before him and show other signs of worship.

It is also given out that the elder boy wrote a book, *At the Feet of the Master*, which the plaintiff has reason to believe to be a compilation made by Mr. Leadbeter. The plaintiff submits that this course of conduct is calculated to warp the moral nature of the boys and to make them moral degenerates. The defendant beyond putting forward divine claims on behalf of the boys, has not taken proper care of their education. The plaintiff submits that he as the father of the said boys

is entitled to act as their guardian, and is entitled to their custody, and further submits that the letter referred to in paragraph 4 cannot have the effect of depriving him of the same, even assuming that it could, under the circumstances above detailed, the defendant having proved herself totally unfit to be in charge of the boys, and the boys ought to be removed from her care.

When the said letter was given the plaintiff believed the defendant to be superhuman, and was completely under her influence and control, as he took her to be his preceptress, who should be obeyed implicitly and make any sacrifice demanded, and the contract, if any, made under such circumstances is void, on the ground of undue influence. In any case, if the defendant is unfit to be entrusted with the guardianship of the minors, the plaintiff's natural right as guardian will again arise, in as much as the letter, if valid in law, was only a surrender of rights in favour of the defendant alone. The plaintiff's delay in taking action has been due only to the faith which until recently he shared with many other persons that the defendant was semi-divine, and further to the belief that the defendant would keep the boys away from the influence of Mr. C. W. Leadbeter, as promised by her. It was only on receipt of the letter, dated 7th February, 1912, that the plaintiff realized fully how totally unfit the defendant was to be the guardian of the boys.

10. The plaintiff submits that as the guardian of the boys he is entitled to their custody, and even otherwise, in the interests of the boys, and of their moral welfare,

the defendant ought to be compelled to give them up to the plaintiff. The plaintiff submits that he had no authority and could not have delegated his parental rights to the defendant. Even assuming however that he could do so, he was at liberty to revoke it at any time, especially with a view to the moral welfare of the boys, and that after the receipt of the said letter the defendant has no authority to keep the boys with herself. In answer to the plaintiff's notice, the defendant merely acknowledged the receipt.

11. The cause of action arose partly at Adyar in the years 1910, 1911 and 1912, when the plaintiff discovered the various matters referred to above, in relation to the bringing up of the boys, and lastly in or about the 11th July, 1912, when the plaintiff sent a registered notice demanding delivery of the minors. The value of the relief for the purposes of jurisdiction is Rs. 3,000.

The plaintiff prays for judgment:—

(*a*) declaring that the plaintiff is entitled to the guardianship and custody of his minor boys, J. Krishnamurthi and J. Nityanandam;

(*b*) declaring, if necessary, that the defendant is not entitled to, or in any case is unfit to be in charge of the said boys;

(*c*) directing the defendant to hand over the boys to the plaintiff or to such other person as the Honourable Court may seem meet;

(*d*) for costs of the suit and for such further or other relief as to this Honourable Court may seem meet.

I, Narayaniah, the plaintiff, above-named, do hereby declare that all the facts stated above, except portions of paragraphs 7 and 9 are true to my knowledge, and the above said portions are based on information and belief.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mrs. Besant's Written Statement.

In the High Court of Judicature at Madras.

G. Narayaniah ... ... Plaintiff.

Vs.

Mrs. Annie Besant ... ... Defendant.

Written statement of the defendant above-named is as follows:—

The address of the defendant for service of all notices and process is at the office of her solicitors, Messrs. King and Partridge, Parry's Buildings, Esplanade Road, Madras.

1. The defendant admit paragraph 1 of the plaint and says with reference to paragraph 2, that Adyar is her official but not her permanent address. She alternately resides at Adyar, Madras, and Benares when in India, and with Mrs. Jacob Bright at 82, Drayton Gardens, Kensington S. W., and the Lodge Esher, when in England.

2. The defendant states that the plaintiff wrote to the defendant in January, 1903, offering his services gratuitously at head-quarters. He requested to be allowed to live with his family at Adyar, and on the 23rd day of Jauuary, 1909, he was permitted to do so in a cottage near the Vasanta Press, with his four sons and other relations.

3. The defendant first met the boys J. Krishnamurthi and J. Nityanandam on the 27th day of November, 1909. She conceived a great liking for them and finding they were painfully emaciated and much neglected in the education and showing signs of ill usage, secured them better food, kind treatment and careful tuition. From the 14th day of December, 1909 and onwards they ceased to live with the plaintiff and resided in the head-quarters buildings at Adyar.

4. The defendant admits she asked the plaintiff to constitute her as the legal guardian of the two boys and that he gave her a letter to that effect dated the 6th day of March, 1910, defendant undertaking to give them the best possible education in England and to enter them in an English University at her own expense.

5. The allegations in paragraph 5 of the plaint with reference to Mr. Leadbeter and J. Krishnamurthi are false and malicious. The plaintiff never complained of any impropriety on the part of Mr. Leadbeter or objected to his associating with his sons. The plaintiff allowed them to remain in the close company of Mr. Leadbeter for two years. They were left in his sole charge on several occasions when the defendant was

absent from Madras without any objection on his part. The only complaint made by the plaintiff was that Mr. Leadbeter kept them too much away from him. On the contrary plaintiff lived in amity with Mr. Leadbeter and often sought his assistance. The allegation as to the servant Lakshman seeing an offence about this time is absolutely false.

6. The defendant admits that on or about November, 1911, she told the plaintiff that she had great hopes that his sons would both make a great step forward in the spring, and that then for three months they would have to remain secluded with Mr. Leadbeter and herself. She denies that he objected, on the contrary she affirms that he expressed great pleasure at the prospect. No question as to not going to Ootacamund arose until January, 1912, and then in an entirely different connection.

7. The defendant admits that the plaintiff came to her at Benares on the 31st day of December, 1911 or 1st day of January, 1912 and without giving any reasons, requested that Mr. Leadbeter should be separated from the boys, and she declined to comply with the request. She denies that she had ever before refused to adopt the course requested, and denies that she then stated that the boys and Mr. Leadbeter had lived together for several lives, that he was an Arhat, or saint who was on the verge of divinity. She denies that the plaintiff stated that he could not accept any such position or that he threatened to take action.

8. The defendant states that under these circumstances she decided to take the two boys to Europe for 3 months study and seclusion instead of to Ootacamund or Kashmir and sent Mr. Leadbeter to find a suitable place in either Italy or Sicily and wrote to plaintiff to this effect on the 13th day of January. At Calcutta when the defendant was on her way from Benares to Adyar she was met with a letter saying that the plaintiff threatened to lodge a suit to deprive her of the custody of the boys. She arrived at Adyar on 19th January and invited the plaintiff to meet her on that day; he met her in the presence of certain friends, before whom he stated that he had never made to her any such charge against Mr. Leadbeter as is now alleged. He said further that he had no objection to the boys going to England, nor to their being with Mr. Leadbeter if she were also there. Knowing that it was possible that her public work might take her away for a short time after three months were over she specifically refused to make any promise as regards their being with Mr. Leadbeter in the future. The plaintiff acquiesced, saying, in answer to a question that he wanted nothing more. The defendant left Madras on the 26th day of January, 1912.

9. The defendant received a letter dated the 15th February, 1912, containing various inaccurate and absurd statements. She does not remember receiving any letter dated February, 7th. The defendant wrote to the plaintiff a letter dated 7th February, 1912 expressing her disgust at his unnatural conduct as a father.

She denies that the statement in it is a lie. She denies that he paid for the boys' meals since December 1909, except partially when they were in Adyar. It was the plaintiff's expressed wish that the boys should remain in England from 1911.

She left the boys in England for the sake of their education, and also, if possible, to shield them from the knowledge of the terrible charge levelled against the elder by his father, as this knowledge would demoralise them.

10. The defendant states that it is absolutely false that she was aware of any evil practices of Mr. Leadbeter. She feels assured of the purity of Mr. Leadbeter's life, not only from her own twenty-three years knowledge of his character, but also from the testimony of many fathers and mothers as to help received from him by their sons.

11. The defendant admits that she went to Sicily and remained there with her wards, Mr. Leadbeter, and others.

12. The defendant denies that she named the first boy Alcyone; he received that name from another person as a mere *nom de plume*, similar names being given to about 220 people, for the purposes of identifying them through a series of articles; nor has she stated that he is, or is going to be, the Lord Christ or the Lord Maitreya; the boy is not deified, but is a happy healthy lad; it is true that respectable people have prostrated themselves before him.

13. The defendant denies that plaintiff was in-

duced by undue influence to execute the letter referred to in paragraph 9 of the plaint and states that he did so and handed the two boys over to her custody and care of his own free will and choice. The defendant submits that under the circumstances herein set out the plaintiff is not entitled to revoke the said letter and claim the restoration of his sons.

14. The defendant submits that the plaintiff is not a fit and proper person to resume the custody of the boys in question. When she took charge of them they showed unmistakable signs of physical, moral and mental neglect. Since they have been with defendant they have been well fed, well cared for, clothed and carefully educated at a considerable expense by the defendant. Defendant has secured the services of Mr. Arundale, the Principal of the Central Hindu College at Benares, to be their private tutor in England, and their names have been entered at Oxford University; they are at present under the protection of the widow of the Rt. Hon. Jacob Bright, M. P., where defendant has every reason to believe that they are perfectly happy and are making satisfactory progress with their studies. There has been a marked improvement in every way in the boys since they left their father and came under defendant's protection and she believes it is their desire not to be removed from their present life and surroundings and that they are unwilling to return to the plaintiff.

15. The defendant does not admit any portions of the plaint except those which are expressly admitted

in her written statement, and puts the plaintiff to the strict proof of the allegations made by him in the plaint.

16. The defendant submits that it is not a *bona fide* action, it having been filed more than 2 years after the alleged occurrence referred to in paragraph 5 of the plaint, but that plaintiff has been instigated and financed by third parties not acting in the interests of the minors.

17. The defendant prays that the suit be dismissed with costs.

I, Annie Besant, the defendant above named, do declare that what is stated in all the paragraphs of the above written statement is true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

CHAPTER IX.

A Commissioner sent to take Evidence.

On the 21st of January, 1913, Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer applied on behalf of Mr. Narayaniah before Mr. Justice Bakewell in the Madras High Court, for the examination on Commission of some witnesses in Bombay, Benares and elsewhere to prove certain allegations contained in the plaint. In support of the application the learned Vakil read the following affidavit of the plaintiff.

Plaintiff's Affidavit.

I have instituted the above suit for the recovery of my minor sons, J. Krishnamurthi and J. Nityanandam, and issues were settled herein on the 10th instant. Over

and above the questions of law raised by the defendant, issues have been framed as to the exercise of spiritual influence by the defendant over the plaintiff. The evidence of the plaintiff and of other members of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society would be indispensable to the plaintiff's case, in as much as the plaintiff relies on certain pledges and observances connected with the Esoteric Section. Mr. J. J. Vimadalal is a solicitor in Bombay and is the President of the Blavatsky Lodge there, which is a branch of the Theosophical Society. He was, also, a member and Warden of the Esoteric School of the Theosophical Society, Bombay. Mr. Bertram Keightly is a Barrister-at-Law, and was the General Secretary of the Indian Section and also of the British Section of the Theosophical Society. He was also a member of the Esoteric School. Babu Bhagavan Das was also the General Secretary of the Indian Section till December last. Mr. D. K. Biswas was also a member of the Esoteric School, as well as Miss. Lilian Edger, M. A. All the aforesaid persons excepting Mr. Vimadalal, have been well acquainted with the plaintiff as well as with the defendant, and will speak as to the great influence exercised by the defendant on the plaintiff and members of the Esoteric Section as their spiritual head. Messrs. Vimadalal and Bhagavan Das will speak personally as to the statements made by the defendant regarding J. Krishnamurthi becoming or being Lord Christ or Lord Maitreya, such statements having been made in their presence.

Mr. Bertram Keightly was one of the members of the Advisory Council appointed by the late Col. Olcott, the President of the Theosophical Society, to assist him in the investigation into the charges brought by the American Section of the Theosophical Society against Mr. C. W. Leadbeter, in 1906. His evidence will be absolutely essential with regard to issues 6, 7, 8 and 10. He will also prove that one Jinarajadasa, under whose custody and control the boys are at present, is the disciple of Mr. Leadbeter and defends his teachings. Mr. Vimadalal will also speak of the defendant's knowledge of the character and antecedents of Mr. Leadbeter.

Babu Bhagavan Das will speak to my complaint to him regarding Mr. Leadbeter's practices with reference to my first boy. He will also prove the cult of J. Krishnamurthi, and the worship paid to him by many as a future World Teacher or Coming Christ. Miss. Lilian Edger and Mr. D. K. Biswas, will speak to their knowledge of Mr. Leadbeter. They will also speak to Mr. Leadbeter's antecedents and character.

Mrs. Besant's Reply Affidavit.

Mr. Ramaswamy Iyer then read the following counter-affidavit filed by Mrs. Besant.

I am the defendant in the above suit, and I have read the summons filed therein by the plaintiff together with his affidavit filed in support thereof.

With regard to the paragraphs 1 and 2 of the plaintiff's affidavit, I say that the Esoteric School and Esoteric Section are voluntary religious groups of students,

formed for study, meditation, and the improvement of character, and I submit that no enquiry into or evidence as to their proceedings are relevant to this case and they should not be admitted as such by this Honourable Court. To the best of my knowledge and belief the statements made by the plaintiff to the effect that he is well acquainted with the persons named in the last nine lines of paragraph 2 of his affidavit is incorrect. I admit that Mr. Bertram Keightly was asked by the late Col. Olcott to assist him in the confidential enquiry made in the year 1906 into some charges brought by the Executive of the American Section against Mr. Leadbeter, and that Mr. Keightly was present at that confidential enquiry, but I submit that the whole matter there considered is not relevant to issues 6, 7, 8 and 10, as alleged in paragraph 4 of the plaintiff's affidavit. I deny the allegation made as to Mr. Jinarajadasa. The said Mr. Jinarajadasa definitely stated in the year 1906 that he wholly disagreed with Mr. Leadbeter's advice to certain vicious boys and has never at any time defended it. I deny that Mr. Vimadalal can say anything with regard to my knowledge of Mr. Leadbeter beyond that which is issued by me in print.

I admit that at the end of December, 1911, the plaintiff spoke to Mr. Bhagavan Das about Mr. Leadbeter and the elder minor, and that Mr. Bhagavan Das shortly after, namely in January, 1912, (the plaintiff having left Benares) told me what the plaintiff had said. This was the first intimation made to me of the improper conduct alleged to have occurred in 1910, and

that even then the said Bhagavan Das did not mention the crime alleged, but only mentioned an offence of a totally different nature. I have already denied that any worship has been paid to J. Krishnamurthi as future World Teacher or Christ as alleged. I deny that the persons named in paragraph 6 of the plaintiff's affidavit can by any possibility know anything of the alleged practice, beyond the false charges made by the plaintiff in December, 1911, for the reason that they live in Benares and have not been at Adyar since the plaintiff came thither in 1909, and I deny that they have any knowledge of Mr. Leadbeter's character and antecedents beyond hearsay aud evil gossip.

The plaintiff then submitted the following reply.

Mr. Narayaniah's Reply Affidavit.

I do not propose to let in any evidence as to the proceedings of the Esoteric Section, as alleged in paragraph 2 of the counter affidavit, but it will be necessary for me to prove what it is and what spiritual influence is wielded by the defendant over the members of the said Esoteric Section. For the purpose of proving the 6th issue, certain pledges given prior to entering the same by the members of the Esoteric Section and School and certain observances by way of worship will show the semi-divine position ascribed to the defendant by members of that Section, and they will also show how these observances are obligatory on the members of the said Section and School. I am well acquainted with the persons specified in my affidavit, as I have met them constantly during

my membership of the said Society. With reference to the 8th issue, the evidence of Mr. Bertram Keightly would be most essential and would in fact be the most valuable evidence that it is possible to produce, in as much as I rely on certain admissions made by Mr. Leadbeter in his presence which could conclusively prove that the said Mr. Leadbeter is a man of immoral habits and character and unfit to associate with young persons. He is also a witness to the statement referred to in the 10th issue and so far as the 6th and the 7th issues are concerned, he will prove the knowledge of the defendant of the accusations made against Mr. Leadbeter in her presence, to which she paid no heed. Mr. Vimadalal will also prove with reference to issue No 10 that the defendant admitted the character of Leadbeter. He will also speak about the worship paid to the elder boy as the future Lord Maitreya. With reference to Jinarajadasa, Mr. Keightly will definitely prove his adherence to Mr. Leadbeter's doctrines long before 1906, when it is alleged he disagreed with Leadbeter's advice.

Babu Bhagavan Das will prove that defendant was informed by Lakshman and others about Leadbeter's practices. I deny the allegations in paragraph 5 of the defendant's counter affidavit that the persons stated therein do not know anything of the facts alleged. As a matter of fact my evidence will prove that they became aware of his practices and will also prove that the defendant instituted an enquiry for the purpose of knowing as to whether Leadbeter had misconducted himself

with the boy. This enquiry was made at Benares. The persons referred to in my affidavit are all living in other Presidencies, and they are not willing to travel to Madras to give evidence, and their evidence is most material to the issues under enquiry.

Mrs. Besant's Reply.

Mrs. Besant replied that her objection was that the Esoteric Section of the Society was formed of voluntary religious groups of students for the purposes of study and meditation, and any enquiry as to their proceedings was not relevant to the case. There were certain pledges made by members of the Sections, and they ought not to be made public. At present there were 3,000 members belonging to the Esoteric Section, and the giving out of the pledges meant the wounding of the religious feelings of these members in various parts of the Presidency and elsewhere. She was quite willing to file the whole documents connected with the case, and she was also anxious that everything should be said that ought to be said, but she thought the issue of the Commission a waste of time and money, and she would oppose any introduction of the Esoteric Section and School into the case. Anyhow if His Lordship was inclined to issue Commission to examine witnesses on behalf of the plaintiff, she would also request to issue Commission to examine Dr. P. V. Sekhara, Dr. V. C. Gokhale, and Mr. T. V. Gupta at Poona, and Mr. N. Manlaxmivale and Mr. S. G. Raja in Bombay, on her behalf.

His Lordship appointed Mr. Arumantham Pillai as the Commissioner to take the evidence of the witnesses of the plaintiff and the defendant in Bombay, Poona, Allahabad and Benares; and shortly afterwards the Commissioner left Madras for that purpose, being accompanied by the Vakils for the plaintiff and the defendant, and also by Mrs. Besant.

Such parts of the evidence thus taken as were used in the case of G. Narayaniah *vs.* Mrs. Besant will be found in a later chapter.

CHAPTER X.

The High Court Case.

On Thursday, March 20th 1913, the suit by Mr. G. Narayaniah, for the recovery of his two minor sons, J. Krishnamurthi and J. Nityananda, from the defendant, Mrs. Besant, came on for hearing before Mr. Justice Bakewell, in the Madras High Court. As the Easter holidays commenced the following day, the case was adjourned from the 20th to the 25th of March, but on the 20th Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer opened the case for the plaintiff. He was instructed by Messrs. S. Subbaraya Iyer and N. Chendrasekhara Iyer.

Mrs. Besant conducted her defence in person; and beside her sat Mr. George Arundale.

About twelve European and American residents at the head-quarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar were present.

The plaintiff, Mr. Narayaniah, and his eldest son Mr. Sivaram sat directly behind Mr. Ramaswamy Iyer.

The small Court was very full, many Vakils thronging the centre table, but the general public were not admitted, the few seats being reserved for the friends of the plaintiff and of the defendant.

The learned Vakil, in opening the case for the plaintiff, said that the action was one brought by the plaintiff for the recovery of his two children from the defendant's custody. Certain reasons were alleged in the plaint, and the defence had raised various questions of law. He proposed to deal first with the questions of law, namely the question relating to the jurisdiction of the High Court and the question whether the suit was maintainable and whether the power or authority given by the plaintiff to the defendant to take charge of the children was revocable.

The learned Vakil said that in paragraph 3 of the plaint the circumstances under which the boys came to be at Adyar were explained. He then read paragraphs 4 and 10, and he said that in the latter paragraph it was stated that the defendant ought to be compelled to give up the sons of the plaintiff. It was also stated that the plaintiff could revoke the guardianship at any time, if by so doing he furthered the moral welfare of his children or even irrespectively of any such question. The suit was first filed in the Chingleput Court, and was transferred to the Madras High Court, where the original written statement of the defendant was struck out. Neither in the first written statement, nor in the

amended written statement, was any plea of jurisdiction raised at all. Now, on the ground that the minors were away from India, it was suggested by the defendant that there was no remedy possible for the plaintiff, and that the Decree of this Court could not operate so as to bring the minors back to India. Such a plea, if brought forward by the defendant, ought to have been raised in the Chingleput Court, or in the Madras High Court at the time of the application for transfer, or at the time of the motion to strike out the defence, or at the time of the filing of the amended statement. In her written statement, defendant gave up all claims to the dismissal of the suit on the ground of any technical plea, and pressed only for a thorough investigation into the merits of the case. At no stage throughout the progress of litigation did she plead to the jurisdiction of the Court.

The learned Vakil went on to say that the action was a personal action, and he read Sections 9 and 20 of C. P. C. and said that read together they provided that a suit may be and ought to be brought where the defendant actually resided. The English Courts had never declined to assume jurisdiction on the ground that any order that might be passed would be inoperative beyond the local limits of their jurisdiction. Supposing a minor was taken away to France, if an English Court passed an order of guardianship, the French Courts would certainly pay regard to that order. The defendant was within the jurisdiction of this Court, and she had not said that the boys had run away. She was at present in possession of the boys and she could ask them

to come here. She had the power to bring the boys back. Even supposing the question of jurisdiction arose, defendant had specially waved it.

Another plea raised was that the Guardian and Wards Act having been enacted, it ought to be applied wherever qnestions of custody or guardianship arose, and that, therefore, the present suit was unsustainable. The learned Vakil said the Guardian and Wards Act applied only where it was sought to obtain an order making or declaring a person a guardian or giving him certain powers. There was an inherent right in the parent as guardian and he could proceed to assert his right, and such class of cases is outside the purview of the Guardian and Wards Act. It could not be said that the right of the parent had in the present case been taken away. Enactments never took away private rights or causes of action unless they did so expressly. They could not do so by implication. The Guardian and Wards Act did not apply to this case.

In resuming his address on the 25th of March, the learned Vakil went on to the point whether the plaintiff was entitled to revoke the authority given by him to the defendant for the custody of his children, and whether the defendant had irrevokable authority for the custody of the minors. He submitted that the father had an absolute right to have the custody of his children, and to bring them up according to his own desires, and that the right could not be interfered with by a third person, unless to the extent to which he was a consenting party. The mere poverty of a

parent, or the circumstances that possibly a child might be more luxuriously brought up elsewhere than with the parent, was not a proper criterion for a Court to act upon with reference to the custody and guardianship of minors. Unless the conduct of a father amounted to moral aberration of a pronounced type, or his cruelty was such as to endanger the child, the Court would ordinarily respect the authority of the father of the child and his right to its custody and guardianship. The learned Vakil proceeded to cite decisions showing the interpretation of the law on this point. Afterwards he pointed out that in the present case the father felt that certain surroundings were not proper for the minors. The father felt that the society of a certain person, which was an evident concomitant of the defendant's custody of the children, was not conducive to their proper up-bringing, and he asked that they should be given back to him. It might be contended by the defendant that Courts ought not to act on a suspicion, and that unless the charge were conclusively proved, the Court should not interfere with the original arrangement made by the father for the custody and guardianship of the children. The plaintiff's answer to that would be that if he had a well-founded suspicion, a reasonable fear, that the up-bringing of his children would be such as would not be to their best interests, then he could exercise his natural right and put an end to the arrangement.

The learned Vakil proceeded to cite certain decisions, according to which a child had a right after the

age of 16 to say what course of life he would follow in the future. But Counsel pointed out that later decisions had shewn that such a theory was not valid in law, and that the only question Courts could take notice of was the question of majority and minority, and he said that up to the age of 21 parents had absolute right of custody and guardianship of their children.

The learned Vakil then went on to deal with the facts of the case and he filed as an Exhibit the letter* given by the plaintiff to the defendant, on the 6th of March, 1910, in which Mr. Narayaniah constituted Mrs. Besant as the guardian of his two children.

His Lordship asked what the plaintiff was, and Counsel replied that Mr. Narayaniah was a retired Tahsildar. He was a Graduate, and he had a Teacher's Certificate. His eldest son was studying in the Medical College. At Adyar he had been employed as Assistant Corresponding Secretary to the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society, and at that time he had had not only his own children under his care but also some of the children of his friends. Counsel then explained how the two minors were left in charge of the defendant. At the Mylapore school their progress had not been satisfactory, and Krishnamurthi, the elder boy, who was backward in his studies, was caned by his tutor. That was the boy about whom all the trouble had arisen. Afterwards the two boys were given instruction in the Theosophical Society.

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* This letter will be found in the Appendix.

Passing to the portion of the letter wherein it is stated that Mrs. Besant should be the guardian of the boys during their minority, Counsel submitted that under that contract it is was not open to the defendant to delegate that guardianship to another, Counsel would endeavour to show to his Lordship that what had really been done in the case before the Court was that the delegation of the boys' education and their up-bringing had been sub-delegated to a person for whom the father had the strongest aversion and whose education and nature the father deplored very much and as to whose morals the father had the strongest suspicion.

The Court rose for lunch, and after the luncheon interval, Mrs. Besant asked His Lordship to permit her to argue the questions of law at once. But His Lordship said that the Counsel for the plaintiff must go on in the usual way.

Continuing, Mr. Ramaswamy said that the plaintiff took up his residence at Adyar in January, 1909, and the defendant undertook to help in the future education of his boys.

He was anxious that his two sons should be properly educated and for this purpose he was willing and anxious to see that the defendant should undertake their education, so that they might have a useful and complete career. It was noteworthy that there were certain admissions in the written statement (of Mrs. Besant) which made it clear that the future career chalked out for one of these boys was that of a religious teacher. The plaintiff's case was that he had never intended that,

and that in itself was in effect a breach of one of the terms of the contract that the boys should be given the liberal education that their father desired.

There was another point on which Counsel would rely. It was admitted that the plaintiff, knowing that Mr. Leadbeter was exercising influence over his sons, was anxious to prevent that influence gaining ground. It was admitted that about April 10, 1910, there was trouble and the plaintiff wanted to go away from Adyar, taking the boys with him.

Later Counsel filed the following letters from Mr. Leadbeter to the defendant relating to this trouble, which letters showed that some trouble actually took place.

Adyar, April 10th, 1910.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

Very many thanks for yours of the 14th. It is good that old Narayaniah has to work hard at Besant Gardens for on the whole it keeps him out of some mischief, and gives him less time to brood over imaginary wrongs. He seems to have had a bad fit of his insanity two days ago, but it does not last long. He said nothing to me (he never does so) but he was rude to the boys and he wrote a long crazy letter to Wadia saying that as he had induced him to sign the document (the letter given to Mrs. Besant making her guardian of the boys and dated March 6th, 1910,) he held him responsible for seeing that all he wished should be done. He pretended just now to have discovered that the boys

took milk in the morning and to be much horrified at it. Of course we know that the milk was for some time sent to his own house, and that he knew all about it, but he did not know that we were aware of that. It horrified him also that they should drink before meditation, but I feel quite serene on that, for you remember the special caution of the Master "Do not forget that India is not England, and that these young bodies are not so strong as yours. See to it that they always have food immediately on rising, before they do anything else whatever, and do not neglect to administer it at frequent intervals each day, for what you have to do with them means a severe strain on the physical vehicle for young boys". I have fulfilled these instructions, I mean I have carried them out most sedulously, especially with Krishna, upon whom the strain has been so much greater than Nitya, and I am proposing to continue to do so, whatever queer old superstitions the parent may have. But is it not odd that he cannot let things alone? It seems such an easy thing to do, just to keep quiet and mind one's own business. However, as I said, he spoke no word to me. Wadia did not answer his letter, and now the boys report he is quite reasonable and friendly again.

I am,

Yours affly,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBETER.

Adyar, April, 20th 1910.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

All is peace again now, and I have the man's promise that it shall remain so until you come. So you need feel no anxiety. I leave all details until you come. It has been a very trying time for several of us. Wadia has stood by us nobly, and the Judge has been splendid. But we cannot be subject to alarms and excursions of this kind. It is too fatiguing and it does harm to the boys. It was a clear case of obsession by black magicians without doubt. It was Krishna who exercised the fiend and pacified the poor victim. This is the last letter to Benares. I am so thankful you are coming home. Gracious expressions of commendation from the Master. With very much love.

I am,
Yours most affectionately,
(Sd.) C. W. LEADBETER.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

You say you will go to Ranchi on the 24th of April, so it seems to me just possible that this may be delivered to you before you leave, if the post works on Sunday in Benares. I mentioned to you yesterday that the Master had spoken very kindly and encouragingly about the recent disturbance here, but I had not time to tell you what He said, and I should like you to know it exactly as soon as possible, lest by chance you should not have remembered in full, though I think you do

generally remember anything that concerns the boys. I wrote it all down as soon as I woke, so as to be sure to have it accurately, for every word of His is precious.

"You are passing through a troubled time, but do not fear, you know all will be well. The work which you are doing for me is of such importance that you cannot hope that it will escape the attention of the darker powers, and the nominal father by his angry jealousy offers them a convenient instrument. I regretfully reiterate what my brother said to you before. The less he (Mr. Narayaniah) sees of the boys for the next few years the better. He must kindly but firmly be made to understand that he must no more interfere with them in any way whatever than with their brother Hubert, that in word and deed he must leave them absolutely free to follow their own will and your instructions. I approve of the careful arrangements which you have made with regard to bathing, eating and sleeping, continue them, and when any change is needed I will myself tell you. Again I thank my young friend Clarke for his assistance to you in all this and for his hearty devotion to my dear boys, I send my thanks to your Vice-President and to my young friend Wadia for their ready and whole-hearted support then, when danger seemed to threaten them. My young brother Krishna has shewn wisdom in his decisive and yet tactful management of the case, but he must not allow himself to feel the least agitation, nor to forget for a moment that the power of the Brotherhood now stands

behind him and that the Star of the King shines over him."

Now I have told Clarke of this message to him, but not of the last paragraph, other than to say that the Master approved of what we have done. Nor have I given the messages to the Judge and Wadia, because I know how much more they will mean to both of them if you give them, and as you were present you have the right to do so, All seem quiet at present, but after the specimen of his insanity that we have had, we still never feel secure until a definite understanding has been arrived at, and even then he will not keep to it. He promises on his honour (I wonder whether he has any ?) that he will make no further disturbance and will not try to interfere in any way with the boys until you come back, but then, he says, he is going to dictate his terms. He has not yet come to see me since this outburst, though I sent for him, but Krishna says he will bring him one day soon, and I have no doubt he will prevail upon him to do what he wishes. I am sorry that all this lunacy should trouble you when you have so many other things to think about.

We shall be rejoiced to see you back. With very much love.

I am ever,

Yours most affectionately,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBETER.

Some telegrams were sent to Mrs. Besant between April 5 and 18, 1910, but she said in Court that she had destroyed them.

Continuing his address, Counsel said that in January, 1910, something seemed to have happened to the elder boy, namely "initiation." He would refer to certain documents which showed that it had been asserted that that initiation was the overshadowing by some divine influence, that the boy at that time became a vehicle of superhuman power.

Later, Counsel filed the following letters and extracts among other Exhibits.

Letter from Mr. C. W. Leadbeter to Defendant.

Adyar, December, 24th, 1909.

DEAR ANNIE,

I am directed to see that the boys do not again enter their old house, and I fear I may have difficulty with that father, since his mind moves very slowly. Can you impress it upon him? It is simple enough really. Their new room will be ready before your return, and until then they sleep in yours. Until the whole house is ready let them continue to take food in the Dharmasala, as they are doing now, but this detail also needs to be impressed upon him, for he is dull of understanding about such things. I wonder whether the Master anticipates trouble with him about that ceremony, for He again referred to it last night, saying "Remember that they must not be absent more than the time which I allowed." So it would seem that there is some special reason, something more than has occurred to me. Also they are not to follow a paid priest, but to say for themselves anything that may be considered necessary. The Master plainly intimated that this was

the last time they would be permitted to take part in anything of this sort, and this only as a concession to "the weaker brethren." I think it would be a blessing if the father could be kept away over the date of the ceremony, January 7th, I think, ... could you not send him to inspect a branch in Kashmir or some other distant province? I am rather nervous about the function. I must do what I am told, and I know the procrastinating ways so well that I feel sure there will be trouble.

I am,
Yours most affictionately,
(Sd.) C. W. LEADBETER.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

Many thanks for yours of the 22nd. I had already said that none should enter your rooms, but Mrs. R. seems to have been accepted without any grumbling, so the boys are left at peace. I feel exactly what you say that all these small outer things should be made as easy as possible, so that all strength may be left for the real work. I hope that you can arrange that they shall eat in the Dharmasala, (as they are now doing) until their new house is ready, indeed it might be better that they should continue to do so. The father, of course, may also continue to do so, if he likes, but that does not matter to us. I hope he can be kept away over the time of the ceremony (Mr. Narayaniah was at that time in Benares for the Annual Convention), for I fear that complications may arise if he is present. I think a

month's tour in the North would be very good for him and for us. The arrangement of putting them in your room is most admirable, and is highly commended. They enjoy themselves much with their cycles. Krishna has now ridden. * *

I am,

Yours affectionately,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBETER.

I send very much love to you.

(Sd.) KRISHNA.

Adyar, December 30th, 1909.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

Very many thanks for yours of Christmas Day. I hope that Narayaniah will understand that a Master means exactly what He says must be done. Let him understand that this is the last ceremony that He will allow, and that He allows this only for the sake of weaker brethren, like poor old S. It might be well to impress upon him, also, that the boys' room must be finished quickly, so that it may be all dry for them to enter when you return, because his tendency is to neglect that and push forward his part of the building. If we could only get it finished during his absence we could make a much better job of it. I have agreed to the substitution of a brick staircase for the wooden one because I found by experiment that the latter was awkward and unsafe. I am trying to have the room made nice for them and I

do not grudge a few rupess for that purpose. Narayaniah's theory, on the contrary, is that anything will do for the boys.

Krishna's Cyclimeta......................Crisis.

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBETER.

January 3, 1910.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

Very many thanks for yours of the 29th December. I am very glad to hear that the Convention was so harmonious. I think you are right to move Mrs. L. for she is not at-all a suitable person to live so near the Shrine. I hope that this may be the prelude to a move to a yet greater distance. Thank you for the order that the boys should be put in her room on your return, if their own new room is not ready. I trust, however, that it may be finished, for we are pushing it on as fast as possible. The main thing is that they should not re-enter the old house, either for food or for sleeping. Krishna has written you his idea of the ceremony, which began the New Year for us, but he does not remember (for he probably did not see) that the Lord Maitreya Himself looked in and the Star once more gleamed over us at the critical moment. More and more I see the importance of every step in this affair, and my sense of responsibility grows day by day. Of this last development I have told Mrs. Russak, Mrs. Van Hook, Ruspoli and Clarke, the people whom Krishna himself chose. I do not know whether it would be well that the whole Sunday morning should know, but if so, I

think it would be better for you to tell them, on your return. The room is advancing, but the money seems to be exhausted, so I am advancing what I can myself so that the work may not be delayed. The boys are very well and are working capitally. The cycles have done much to develop courage and decision, and I think we shall soon be free from fear and superstition. I am glad that there is a prospect that the father may be detained over the 7th. We get on much more comfortably without him. With ever much love.

Yours affectionately,

(Sd.) C. W. Leadbeter,

Adyar, January 6th, 1910.

My dear Annie,

Many thanks for yours of the 1st. The grouping, which you describe accurately, represents one stage of the proceedings, and it is the time that the Lord Maitreya solemnly gave him into our charge on behalf of the Brotherhood. Krishna was deeply impressed and has been different ever since, Narayaniah has returned and seems very friendly. He tells me that the Master spoke directly to him in the train on the night of the 3rd, and that his views on the whole matter have been clarified and completely changed thereby. I have seen him only for a moment and have not heard particulars, but it is evident that something striking and beautiful happened. When I hear details I will tell you. The

Countess and the Lubkes are here, also Schurman. I enclosed a few photographs that may interest you, they are taken by Ruspoli. With very much love.

Yours affectionately,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBETER,

Among the Exhibits filed by Counsel were passages from the Theosophist describing the Initiation. These have already been given in Chapter IV. Passages from *The Link*, the Organ of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society, were also filed.

August, 1910, "Into the hands of Mr. Leadbeter and myself have been committed three of the young ones who are to play great parts in the approaching work. Our responsibility is very heavy, but the blessing of the Great Ones will, we are confident, enable us to discharge it aright. Fortunate indeed is the Theosophical Society that it is chosen, after being purified by fire, to be the nursery of the Leaders of to-morrow, fortunate is head-quarters that on it should rest the blessing of the Mightiest, and over it should shine the Radiant Star in the East."

The Link, February 1912.

A UNIQUE CEREMONY.

The sudden occurrence of an important event without any shadow of being cast before, is rather characterestic of occult happenings, recalling to the mind the significant words:—

'What I say unto you, I say unto all, *watch.*'

On December 28th, 1911, Mr. G. S. Arundale, addressed an interested audience on 'The Order of the Star in the East.'

Many joined the Order, and the certificates were duly issued. Casually some one suggested that it would be pleasant if the young Head of the Order gave their certificates to the newly admitted members, and the suggestion was accepted and a meeting appointed for the evening of same day. We strolled down to it in due course, and some of the older members stayed away to leave more room for the new comers. The doors were closed and after a few introductory words from myself, Mr. J. Krishnamurthi stepped forward and the national representative, Mr. P. K. Telang, took his place near him to receive the certificate from each member, to read out the name, and to place the certificate in the hands of the Head, to be given by him to its owner.

The line of members began to pass up the central passage, and one or two received their papers with a bow to the Head and a friendly smile from him, and then came a sudden and startling change. The whole atmosphere altered, and the air was thrown into powerful pulsing vibrations of a most extraordinary force. All saw the young figure draw itself up and take an air of serene and dignified majesty, a stateliness new and strange. The approaching member involuntarily dropped on his knees, bowing his head to the ground, and the

smile shone out radiant, compassionate and tender. What else some saw, let me now tell.

A great coronet of brilliant shimmering blue appeared a foot or so above the young head, and from this descended, funnel-wise, bright streams of blue light, till they touched the dark hair entering and flooding the head, the Lord Maitreya was there, embodying Himself in His Chosen. Within the coronet glanced the crimson of the symbol of the Master Jesus, the "Rosy Cross", and high in air, well nigh from the roof, blazed down the dazzling, flashing Star, which all initiates know. Around, guarding the building within, making as it were a living wall, hung the great green Devas, a quadrangle of coruscating light and colour, glorious ever-enriching ranks of beauty and of joy.

No wonder they were felt, although all unseen by most. The influence of the mighty Presences bound all who came so near to them in reverent, palpitating awe, and joy. Young and old, white-haired age and youth, men and women, white and coloured, were all moved by one deep sentiment of wondering delight, and felt themselves verily in a holy place. And we, who sat behind, watching intent, and wondering, we felt as though we were not in the Theosophical Society Hall in Kasi, but one of those sacred places known to the Brethren alone, where the Holy Ones are seen in Their perfect and glorified manhood. And presently all was over, and the glory was withdrawn, and we were once more, with dazzled eyes, in the dim light of fading earthly day. But in our hearts is treasured another memory, which cannot fade, a

memory which, like Mary of Old, we shall ponder over for many a day to come. O. H."

In filing copies of *The Link* as Exhibits, Counsel said that they contained references to the second initiation of the children in Sicily in 1912, and that the following passage in *The Link* for August, 1912, refers to the elder boy.

"And we are now in such a time, while we are waiting for the coming of the Lord Maitreya. How things will be when He is literally amongst us in the body He has chosen, that we do not know? But we do know that the out-pouring of His love, His force, that which we speak of as His magnetism, is poured out already so often, so suddenly, that they must presently change the whole condition of things here in India. Wherever our young Brother goes, he carries with him that influence, that open channel to the higher world,—and there lies the great advantage which you have, which your forefathers have not enjoyed for long, Etc."

Continuing his address, Counsel said that the letter making Mrs. Besant guardian of the boys was signed on the 6th of March, 1910, that about the 14th of April, 1910, something roused the suspicion of the plaintiff, which led to his making a vigorous protest. The plaintiff's case was that that about that time his elder boy (Krishnamurthi) was seen in very undesirable circumstances and under bad conditions, and that therefore he protested and wanted to leave Adyar, and about the 16th of April there was a quarrel between the father and Mr. Leadbeter, and certain telegrams and letters

would be placed before His Lordship (Mr. Leadbeter's letters have been given already, and Mrs. Besant said in Court that the telegrams referred to had been destroyed) which would clearly show that a vigorous protest had been made against something that had happened. One of such letters was dated the 18th of April. About the 10th of May, there was a long discussion which resulted in the defendant's promise that she would keep the boys away from the influence of Mr. Leadbeter. And the evidence of the plaintiff would show that from that time the bath room and the bathing arragements were so shifted that the boys and Mr. Leadbeter should not come into much contact with one another. Mrs. Besant took the boys to Benares about September or October, 1910, and from that time the boys were separated from Mr. Leadbeter until about December, 1910, when they returned with Mrs. Besant to Adyar. Then a certain incident took place which aroused another emphatic protest on the part of the father, and Mrs. Besant was informed of the same. About the 11th of February, 1911, the boys went to Rangoon with Mrs. Besant, and on the 11th of April the defendant promised to take them to England, so as to be away from the influence of Mr. Leadbeter. Then in December, 1911, another incident happened which turned the course of events altogether. About December 28, 1911, the elder boy was supposed to have the foreshadowing of superhuman influence. About the 31st of December, the father, finding that Mr. Leadbeter was again coming into contact with the boys, protested again, and then, for the

first time, the defendant said that the boys could not be separated from Mr. Leadbeter, inasmuch as they had been together in various previous lives, associated in one capacity or another, and that it was not possible, having regard to their future and the possibilities of the boys, that Mr. Leadbeter should be separated from them. Certain letters were exchanged between the parties (these letters have been given in Chapter V) between January and February, 1912, in which the plaintiff said that he was anxious to secure the education of the boys, but at the same time he was most anxious that the boys should not have anything to do with Mr. Leadbeter, and to that vigorous protest came the reply, dated February, 7th 1912, (see in Chapter V, Mrs. Besant's letter written while on the Indian Ocean) in which the defendant stated that the father had been quiescent all these years, and that no father would have been quiet so long if he had seen the things which he alleged he had seen, and therefore his version was a wrong one. In that letter she also said that a number of plaintiff's children had died on account of neglect and ill-treatment, and that in the best interests of the boys they should not be put back into his custody. Further accusation was made of a grave and serious nature against the father of cruel treatment, an accusation which, if true, would have been sufficient to stamp his client as a monster of cruelty. That was the first intimation that the plaintiff had got from the defendant. In that letter defendant said that steps would be taken to keep the boys away from the father until they arrived at age of discretion, when,

in the language of the letter, they could protect themselves against their father. There a definite stand was taken and a pronouncement was made to keep the children away from the father. It was that which finally roused the plaintiff. Undoubtedly the case would present some very curious features. The plaintiff had throughout been trustful of the defendant. He had been greatly under her spiritual influence, and had been believing her statements. The plaintiff had kept quiet, but when his personal character was attacked, and when it was stated that he was unfit to take charge of any young boy, he grew desperate and took action. Then there was certain correspondence lasting from February to April, 1912, with reference to these matters (see letters at the close of Chapter V), and finally in October, 1912, the present suit was filed. The defendant having left the jurisdiction of the Court, the suit could not be filed earlier, unless the plaintiff took a writ of *Habeas Corpus*, in England, a step not only costly, but one causing great inconvenience. The delay relied on by the other side was easily explicable. In the earlier portion of the history of the case there were assurances given by the defendant, which the plaintiff believed to be *bona fide*, as to the separation of the boys from Mr. Leadbeter. It was only when the defendant was distinctly told the plaintiff in December, 1911, that the boys could not be separated from Mr. Leadbeter, and that their future career was bound up with him, that the plaintiff was disillusioned as to the whole of the matters surrounding his relationship with the defendant.

The learned Vakil continuing, said that there were three charges on which he sought the custody of the boys. In the first place, the boys were allowed to associate with a person of immoral character. He was in a position to prove by documents that Mr. Leadbeter held the opinion that certain boys should be given advice of . . . .—. . . . . . He held the view and imparted the advice to persons before puberty on the ground that there were thought forms hovering over the boys, who would otherwise turn out to be immoral in the future. That was an opinion that the defendant was well-acquainted with. That was an opinion that the plaintiff thought ought not to be held by any person having the control over the up-bringing or the education of children. If Mr. Leadbeter were a negligible member of the Theosophical Society, and if his influence might not be pernicious, it would be otherwise, but Mr. Leadbeter, in a volume printed and published as the *Adyar Bulletin*, said that he and the defendant (Mrs. Besant) had witnessed the Supreme Director of the Evolution of the Universe. Mr. Leadbeter was credited with more than normal powers. He was supposed to be "a great initiate," a man on "the threshold of divinity." His position in the Theosophical Society was unique, and throughout Mr. Leadbeter had had the supreme direction of the doctrinal portion of the Theosophical Society. It might be asked what the plaintiff meant by entrusting his children to the care of the defendant, when he knew of her association with Mr. Leadbeter. No doubt in 1906 there were certain

admissions made by Mr. Leadbeter and letters written by him, in which he announced his responsibility for his teachings. An enquiry was held in England, and as a result of it he resigned his membership. In 1908 it was at the instance of the defendant that he was taken back to the Society. But as would be evident from the Commission evidence let in on the part of the defendant, many members of the Society were content to rely on the assurance of the defendant that Mr. Leadbeter was guiltless of all charges made against him, and that he was pure and innocent. It was only when the father saw Mr. Leadbeter practising this vice on the children that he came to entertain grave doubts.

The learned Vakil said that this was a ground on which alone he could appeal to His Lordship and say that his client was entitled to have his children restored to him. It was not neecessary for him to go further, but he would place a few select documents to show what these teachings were. That was not all. It had been said that the elder of the two boys was about to become a vehicle of Lord Maitreya or Lord Christ. There was a letter which would clearly show what the plaintiff had in his mind when he entrusted the care of the children to the defendant. What the father meant was that they were to be given thorough and efficient instruction, in an English University. There was a letter written by Sir Subrahmania Iyer which would make it clear that what induced the plaintiff was an English University training. It was one thing to impart English University education, and another to

encourage a boy in the belief that in some near or distant future his body would be a vehicle of superhuman agency. It might be said that this was a question of belief. With that he (the Vakil) was not going to quarrel. His only complaint was with regard to the treatment and the consequent demoralisation of the boys. Various documents and articles had been written to show that the boys' surroundings had not been healthy. His contention was that a number of things were attributed to the elder boy, and he was taken from one part of the world to another to be shown as possessing more than normal human powers. From the beginning of the entrustment, the boys had not had a systematic education, but were moving from place to place.

The elder boy was supposed to have founded the Order of the Star in the East. He had distributed magnetised ribbons, at 3/ per 11 yards, broadcast, saying that people who wore them would become cognisant of great results. He (the learned Vakil) would endeavour to show, not in a spirit of raillery or mockery, that education such as this was not likely to advance the well-being of the boys.

Another argument that might be advanced was that the elder boy was 18 and the younger one 14, and that their father could wait for their majority. His reply was that that was why his client desired to make the boys wards of the Court. Some length of training and erradication of these tendencies were necessary to make the boys proper citizens, and it was the aim of the father to retain control of the boys until they were 21.

CHAPTER XI.

Evidence for the Plaintiff.

On the 27th of March, Counsel read some of the evidence taken before the Commissioner, (see Chapter 9); and it has been found necessary to condense this here owing to want of space.

Mr. Bertram Keightly, residing at Allahabad, United Province, being examined said:—

"I am a Master of Arts and Barrister-at-Law. I was the General Secretary of the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society for several years and subsequently General Secretary of the British Section. I was the sole agent of the Esoteric Section in India under Madame Blavatsky. I was also a member of the General Council of the Theosophical Society, both *ex-officio* as General Secretary and subsequently. I know Mr. Leadbeter. I first met him in 1884, when he was a Curate of the Church of England. He left Ceylon in 1890, to the best of my belief. During the last fifteen years he has been one of the prominent leaders as also the writers and lecturers in the Theosophical movement. So he stands to the world as a teacher of Theosophy. He is a colleague of Mrs. Besant in Theosophical work; and both of them are considered as "initiates" by some people.

I remember the charges brought against Mr. Leadbeter by the American Section in 1906, and I believe the charges were brought on behalf of the American Section. Mr. Leadbeter was at that time a member of

the British Section. He was also Presidential delegate. I believe a memorial was addressed to Mrs. Besant from America, giving evidence and charges against Mr. Leadbeter, and a copy of this memorial was sent to Mr. Leadbeter in 1906, but I could not be sure whether this was sent prior to the proceedings of the Advisory Committee or simultaneously. Mrs. Besant was certainly in India at the date of the Advisory Committee, and Mr. Leadbeter was present at the Committee in London. I believe the Executive of the American Section pressed for a searching investigation, and Mrs. Besant wrote a reply to the Memorial that had been sent to her from America, rather putting aside the idea of investigation. The American Section could not expel Mr. Leadbeter from the Society and that was why the President was moved in the matter. Colonel Olcott called together an Advisory Committee, consisting of the Executive Committee of the British Section, with the addition of the representative of the French Section and a special representative on behalf of the American Section. I was one of the members of the Committee, the object of which was to advise Colonel Olcott in regard to what action he should take in respect of the charges brought against Mr. Leadbeter. The Committee was not in the position of a jury, but in that of an advisory body. The object of the enquiry was to uphold the honour of the Theosophical Society and keep its honour clean."

Q.—"The Theosophical Society wanted to disown any association with a man who advocated the teaching of . . . . .—. . . . . to young boys?"

A.—" Yes."

Q.—" The charges were in the hands of each of the members of the Committee?"

A.—" Yes."

Q.—" Was Mr. Leadbeter given every opportunity to explain his position and justify his conduct?"

A.—" Yes."

Q.—" Will you tell us what evidence you had at that time.?"

A.—" Speaking generally, and from memory only, I believe we had before us the confessions or rather admissions of one or more boys in America certified by the American Executive and also a letter of Mr. Leadbeter to Mr. Fullerton in which the former admitted having advised . . . . .—. . . . . as a prophylactic measure."

Being shewn a copy of Mr. Leadbeter's letter to Mr. Fullerton and asked to summarise the contents, witness said:—

" Mr. Leadber states that the work of discovering and training hopeful young members of the Theosophical Society has been put into his charge. He finds that the question of sex is of vital importance in their training, and that in the majority of cases great mischief results from suppressed thoughts and desires on such matters. He therefore in certain cases advised ****—***** ."

Q.—" This is exactly what he stated before the Committee?"

A.—" Yes, both in the letter and before the Committee he emphasised the absence of any evil intention in connection with that advice."

Q.—" The Committee was also of opinion that he had no evil intent ? "

A.—" Yes, at first, but later his replies to questions put by members of the Committee caused some of them to come to a different conclusion." (Here witness entered into details that are not suitable for public reading).

Q.—" Mr. Leadbeter referred to an organisation for young men which dealt with the matter in the same manner ? "

A.—" Yes. He stated that such an organisation existed in the English Church."

Q.—" And he said that he expected it to be found in the Roman Catholic Church ? "

A.—" Yes."

Q.—" Did Mr. Leadbeter express any regret for having taught these practices ? "

A.—" No."

Q.—Questioned as to the acceptance of the resignation of Mr. Leadbeter, witness said that some of the members of the Advisory Committee only agreed to its acceptance in order to secure unanimity in the decision of the Committee.

Q.—" State briefly what you know about the re-instatement of Mr. Leadbeter in the Society and the consequences that ensued thereupon."

A.—"When Mrs. Besant became a candidate for the Presidency of the Theosophical Society, she gave a pledge to the British Section not to move for the re-instatement of Mr. Leadbeter to the Society for two years from the summer of 1907. But before the expiration of that time a strong agitation had sprung up in various parts of the Society in favour of Mr. Leadbeter's re-instatement. This culminated in the question being referred to the general vote of the Society at the close of 1908, or the beginning of 1909. A considerable majority having declared in favour of his re-instatement, the result was the resignation from the Theosophical Society of a large number of the oldest and most respected members and a withdrawal from active work of many others."

Q.—"You withdrew from the Society?"

A.—"I withdrew from active work in the Society."

Cross-examined by Mrs. Besant, witness said that he left the Eastern School about 1908, after the decision of the Council with regard to Mr. Leadbeter. He did not hold the opinion that no boy should be put under Mr. Leadbeter's care until after the enquiry in 1906, although he had objected to Mr. Leadbeter's having his pupils sleeping in the same room as himself, and had pointed out to Mrs. Besant how undesirable it was while Mr. Leadbeter was living at Avenue Road.

Mrs. Besant "You think that because people agree with me, they must be non-independent?"

Witness.—"By no means, but when people tell me in all seriousness that a thing must be true because Mrs.

Besant says it, whatever the evidence and facts may be, I cannot attach any high value to their opinion."

Counsel in the course of reading Mr. Keightly's evidence, remarked that the final decision of the Advisory Committee that met in 1906 was decided by Mr. Leadbeter's own statements, and an attempt was made by Mrs. Besant to justify the teaching.

To this Mrs. Besant replied that she found the charges to be false, so she changed.

Counsel then proceeded to read certain passages from the evidence of Mr. Bhagavan Das, as relevant to the suit.

Mr. Bhagavan Das said:—

" I am a Master of Arts of the Calcutta University. I was a Government servant for nine years, first as Tahsildar and then as a Deputy Collector. I left the Government Service of my own accord. In 1912 I was the General Secretary of the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society. I am the Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Central Hindu College at Benares.

I know the plaintiff, Mr. Narayaniah. He was at Benares for the Theosophical Convention in December 1911. At that time he spoke to me about a personal matter of his. He came to my house and appeared to be in great distress of mind and he asked me to help him by inducing Mrs. Besant to separate his sons from Mr. Leadbeter.

He told me to this effect: I am only now saying the substance of what he told me then. He told me that the morals of his boys were being spoiled by

Mr. Leadbeter and that he had himself seen a very unpleasant fact about two years ago. He said it was his custom then to go in the early mornings to a room in the Adyar head-quarters for meditation and that at the same time his two boys used to go to Mr. Leadbeter for their lessons, as he understood. For various reasons his suspicions were aroused, and one morning, after sending off the boys to Mr. Leadbeter, he himself, instead of going into the meditation room, as usual, went towards Mr. Leadbeter's room. He found the smaller boy standing outside the room and on asking him why he was standing outside and where his elder brother was, the boy told him that he had been told to stand there by Mr. Leadbeter and that his brother was in the room with him. He went towards the room and peeped through the door or the blinds and he saw his elder boy sitting on Mr. Leadbeter's knee. Thereupon he pushed open the door and rushed into the room. There was a violent quarrel between Mr. Leadbeter and himself. I asked Mr. Narayaniah whether he had reported all this to Mrs. Besant then, seeing that this took place two years ago nearly. I am not sure, but my idea is that he told me that Mrs. Besant was not there at the time, but that he reported to her at the earliest opportunity possible, and she promised to separate the boys from Mr. Leadbeter. I think he also told me that he made some efforts to take away the boys immediately after the incident from Adyar, but failed somehow. My recollection is not quite clear on this point. I told him that I could speak to Mrs. Besant on the point; that I could do

nothing else. I accordingly spoke to her very shortly afterwards. It may be two or three or four days after that I did this, because Narayaniah asked me to intervene on his behalf and also because there was a lot of undesirable talk going on and I was anxious for the reputation of the Society. Narayaniah told me that he spoke to Mrs. Besant about the incident, but I have no personal knowledge of any such talk. He said that Mrs. Besant made promises to him to meet his wishes. In April 1911, before Mrs. Besant left for England, she told me that she was taking the two boys of Narayaniah also to England. She told me that she was taking the two boys on account of the quarrels of Mr. Leadbeter and Mr. Narayaniah. Mr. Narayaniah told me, in the course of the conversation mentioned by me above, that not only he but the servant of Mrs. Besant, one Lakshman, had also seen a similar incident and had spoken of it at that time to various residents of Adyar. Mr. Narayaniah requested me very urgently to question Lakshman also. I sent for him to my house a day or two later.

In connection with this, Lakshman told me that he had spoken to Mr. Schwartz and Mr. Subbiah and he did not pronounce the name of Mr. Schwartz. But by his description I understood it to be Schwartz. I asked Mr. Subbiah Chetty about this and he said that Lakshman had spoken to him about this. I do not remember to have met Mr. Narayaniah again before he left Benares for Madras after the Convention. To the best of my recollection I had only one talk with Mr. Narayaniah. I remember that he told me that he had tried to see

the elder boy during the Convention days, but that he had not been allowed to do so by Mrs. Besant. Mr. Leadbeter was here for the Convention. He suddenly left Benares and I understood from Mrs. Besant that he had gone off to Italy. I do not think that I asked Mrs. Besant about the absence of Mr. Leadbeter, but she told me that he had gone off to Italy. This talk took place one morning, and then I believe I expressed a little surprise as I had seen him in the house on the previous evening. Mrs. Besant told me that he was wanted for urgent Theosophical work in Italy and that the Master's orders had been received in the night."

I know that an Order called the Order of the Rising Sun was started in the beginning of 1911 or end of 1910 by some of the younger members of the Central Hindu College Staff, chiefly Mr. Arundale. I believe that Krishnamurthi was the central figure in it. Many complaints came to me with regard to this order, as to a new and wrong spirit that was being introduced in the College by it. I was very busy in those days with some domestic affairs and so I could not go myself to the College very often. I wrote to Mrs. Besant about the complaints. She was at Adyar when I wrote to her and I had a reply from her to the effect that she had written to Mr. Arundale advising him that the action he was taking was unwise and would create suspicions in the minds of the parents, who would think that efforts were being made in the College to convert the boys from their own faith.

In April, 1911 some of the older members of the Managing Committee of the College, at an informal meeting, urged strongly on Mrs. Besant the desirability of not pushing the order *i. e.*, the Order of the Star in the East in the College. I do not know exactly the date when O. R. S. was disbanded and O. S. E. was created though I have a sort of recollection that Mr. Arundale, or some other person of the group, had publicly spoken of the Order of the Star in the East at Bankipore or some such place before this informal meeting of the College Managers took place. As the result of that informal meeting, my impression is that Mrs. Besant gave us to understand that nothing would be done in connection with the order in the way of pushing it till her return from England, when we were to have another discussion over it. She left for England a few days after, but in the following May or June printed prospectuses of the O. S. E. were received from her, from England, in which she appeared as the Protectress of the Order and the young boy, Mr. Krishnamurthi, as the Head of the Order, Mr. Arundale as his Private Secretary and various other Professors and the Headmaster as various other Secretaries of Mr. Krishnamurthi. After that many students of the College and School were enrolled as members. Great controversies and troubles began again within the College and in the public papers. The Board of Trustees, I believe, at a meeting in the early part of August 1911, passed Resolutions dissociating the College from all such Orders.

Q.—" Did Mrs. Besant tell you at any time that

Krishnamurthi is or is going to be Lord Christ or Lord Maitreya ? "

A.—" Yes, She told me that the body of Krishnamurthi would be used as a vehicle by Lord Maitreya. In the terms of the question my answer is, No. She did not tell me that Krishnamurthi is or is going to be Lord Christ or Lord Maitreya. A distinction is made between a person being and his body being used as a vehicle by so and so."

Mr. Dhana Krishna Biswas said in his evidence given before the Commissioner :—

" I am a B.A., and I was practising for some time as a Pleader in the Judge's Court at Burdwan and in the Small Cause Court, Calcutta. Afterwards I enrolled myself as a Vakil of the Calcutta High Court. In 1899 I came to Benares as the Assistant Secretary of the Theosophical Society, Indian Section. I became a member of the Theosophical Society in 1886. I am a Zemindar in the districts of " Burdwan, and Hooghly." I was Assistant Secretary of the Theosophical Society, Indian Section, from 1899 to 1907. I first saw Mr. Leadbeter in 1905. He was then a member of the Theosophical Society. After that he went away from Benares and was tried on certain charges before an Advisory Committee in London, and he was made to resign, although in the resignation it was indicated that it was a voluntary thing. He was afterwards re-called or re-admitted by the Theosophical Society in 1908. After Mrs. Besant became President of the Society, she showed an attitude towards calling him back, although

before that she had condemned his conduct. Often in the Eastern School she talked about him, saying he might be called back after two years, if he gave a promise that he would not give such advice again, and she justified his conduct by saying that he gave the advice under necessity and to help some boys, that he did so in other cases because he had discovered from their astral aura that they were on the verge of going the wrong way, and in the cases of some boys he had given the advice when they had gone wrong. This was said before me in one meeting, and knowing that this was not the true state of things, I put to Mrs. Besant the question whether it was not a fact that some of the recipients of the instructions given by Mr. Leadbeter resented the instruction.

To this she replied that it was only in one case. Having gained my point, I kept silent. It was at that meeting also that Miss. Arundale asked Mrs. Besant what her attitude should be in the coming Convention, when Mr. Leadbeter was going to be recalled.? This Miss. Arundale did in a very piteous manner, because she was against Mr. Leadbeter's being re-called, and at the same time she had a great respect for Mrs. Besant. Mrs. Besant replied that Miss. Arundale could have any opinion, but she should not make it public, and put obstacles to Mrs. Besant's action."

Under cross-examination by Mrs. Besant, the witness was asked :—

Q.—"You referred to Miss Arundale's piteous attitude and that she might have her opinion but must not put

any obstacle in my (Mrs. Besant's) way in public. Did she vote against me ?"

A.—" Yes. By " public " I did not confine myself to the Council meeting, I meant the general public."

Q.—" Referring to your statement that Miss. Arundale's name was not made public, will you read the report of the meetings of the General Council published in Vol. XXX, page 107, of the Report of the 33rd Anniversary and Convention of the Theosophical Society, in which it is stated that Miss Arundale recorded her vote against the re-admission of Mr. Leadbeter. ? "

A.—" I read the report and found the name there. I referred to one in which I read there was only one distinct voice, without the name. If I am given time, I can find the passage."

In his evidence taken before the Commissioner, Mr. J. J. Vimadalal, of Bombay, said among other things, " the Order of the Star in the East is alleged by Mrs. Besant to be the embryo of a new religion. It is an order formed with the object of preparing the way for the coming of the Great Teacher. The Head of this Order is J. Krishnamurthi. He is known as " Alcyone." It is one of several names given to several persons who are the subject of certain investigations into the past lives of a few persons. I cannot say who gave that name to Krishnamurthi. It is generally believed that Lord Maitreya will make use of the body of Krishnamurthi when He appears in this world. I have seen the minors, J. Krishnamurthi and J. Nityananda. In

Bombay the boys were garlanded like Mrs. Besant and others, and on the Ballard Pier, when they were on their way to England, some Theosophists made a circle round them by holding each others hands. I believe the object was to protect the boys against the surrounding magnetism, or to prevent anyone touching them."

Under cross-examination by Mrs. Besant, witness said "Over 200 persons have been given names like Alcyone. Mrs. Besant has generally stated that there are many who will be used in the great work to be done by the coming Teacher. I have never heard Mrs. Besant say that the boy Alcyone is the Lord Christ, I know Mrs. Besant regards the *ego* now inhabiting Alcyone's body as a quite different *ego* from that of Lord Christ. One *ego*, according to Mrs. Besant's and my belief, cannot become another *ego*, Therefore the *ego* that we know as "Alcyone" may quit the body and another *ego* may take its place. The statement that the Order of the Star in the East is the embryo of a new religion has appeared in print on more than one occasion."

Counsel then proceeded to read the evidence taken before the Commissioner on behalf of Mrs. Besant.

Dr. V. C. Gokhale said, at Poona, before the Commissioner, that he is a Licentiate of Medecine and Surgery of the Bombay University. He was present in Adyar, in 1910, for the Convention, and he visited Mr. Narayaniah and talked to him about Krishnamurthi, Mr. Narayaniah spoke about the trance in which his son had been in January, 1909, and he said that

Krishnamurthi had seemed more grave and serious afterwards. He said that Krishnamurthi was slow in acquiring book knowledge, but he expected him to make good psychic progress. He said that he had entrusted the education of his sons to Mr. Leadbeter and that he was quite satisfied with the progress his boys were making.

Dr. P. V. Shikare, of Poona, said before the Commissioner, that he is a Licentiate of Medecine and Surgery of the Bombay University. He was at Adyar in December 1910, for the Convention and he went to see Mr. Narayaniah, being interested in him as the father of Krishnamurthi. Mr. Narayaniah seemed quite satisfied with the education his sons were receiving from Mr. Leadbeter. He spoke of the trance into which Krishnamurthi had fallen in January, 1909, and he said that the boy seemed to be much changed afterwards.

Mr. Sitharam Govind Raju said that in 1910, at the Convention at Adyar, he went with his wife to see Mr. Narayaniah, who told him that Krishnamurthi had been attending the boys school at Mylapore, and he had not been satisfied with the progress made by his sons there, and so he had placed his boys under the care of Mr. Leadbeter, Mr. Narayaniah said he was quite surprised at the progress his sons were making in English. He said that Krishnamurthi had seen his dead mother on the third day after her death, and he said that an astrologer had told him that Krishnamurthi would be a great man. Curiosity led witness to visit Mr Narayaniah, and he was not personally acquainted with him.

Ambica Kant Chakravarty said that he had entered the service of Mrs. Besant in 1896, at Benares, and from that time he had managed all her affairs there. He paid the wages of Mrs. Besant's servants. He knew Lakshman. Lakshman came back with Mrs. Besant to Benares in December 1909. When Mrs. Besant returned to Adyar in January, 1910, Lakshman went with her, and he came back to Benares with Mrs. Besant in March 1910. Mrs. Besant left Benares for Madras on the 17th November, 1910, leaving Lakshman behind, and on the 23rd of November Mrs. Besant sent a wire for him, and he went to Madras. Mrs. Besant left Benares after the Convention of 1911, and went to Madras on the 12th of January, 1912. She returned to Benares on the 29th of January. In the interval witness received a wire from Mrs. Besant telling him not to permit Lakshman into her bungalow before her return from Madras. Witness could give no reason for this telegram. As soon as Mrs. Besant returned to Benares, Lakshman took up his ordinary services again.

Before reading the evidence of Mr. Jamsakthi Kunji Mahalakshmi Vale, Counsel submitted to His Lordship that this witness had spoken to facts which were not connected with the case and that if questions other than the issues raised were allowed, he (Counsel) did not know where the case would end.

Mrs. Besant submitted that according to her original written statement, she would prove that the plaintiff was a tool in the hands of others to bring this suit.

His Lordship observed that the suit might have been brought for various other reasons, and the plaintiff might have been induced by motives, but these motives were not material to the case.

Mrs. Besant submitted that she had stated in her original written statement clearly about the motive, and she was now going to prove that this suit was only the last of a long course of consecutive attempts to persecute her, and she intended to examine and cross-examine witnesses to prove this point, until stopped by His Lordship.

Counsel contended that that particular question was argued when His Lordship ruled that particular paragraphs in the original written statement of the defendant were irrelevant and that they should be struck out. The question of motive was asserted in the original statement, and Counsel then moved before the Court that it did not disclose any defence on the main points raised in the pleadings of the plaintiff. The defendant in her original written statement had wandered on to extraneous matters and had introduced questions of motive and persecution. He was therefore inclined, unless His Lordship ruled otherwise, to resist any attempt on the part of the defendant to introduce *de novo* any matter that had been specifically ruled out by His Lordship.

His Lordship perused the evidence of the witness, and afterwards observed that there was not a single statement in his evidence which related to any of the

issues raised in the suit and the correspondence referred to by the witness was received from a third person.

Mrs. Besant said that the witness had destroyed the letters, and she was prepared to prove this by evidence, and also to prove the matters referred to in the letters.

His Lordship wished to know if the witness had been asked to produce those letters.

Mrs. Besant said that the witness stated that the letters had been destroyed.

His Lordship remarked that in any case the letters were from persons who were not parties to the matter.

The learned Counsel said that he understood the letters were given by persons in confidence to the witness, and that therefore he could not show them to third parties. Mrs. Besant submitted that she would prove that Dr. Nanjunda Row, who was the chief agent in the suit, had sent certain letters to the witness relating to the suit, and she further submitted that she would prove by evidence that this matter was referred to in her original statement, which was ordered to be struck out.

Counsel again submitted that there was no issue in the case relating to that matter.

Mrs. Besant said that it came under the last issue, namely whether the plaintiff was entitled to any relief. Mrs. Besant submitted that the plaintiff was not the person entitled to any relief.

His Lordship finally ruled that the evidence given by the witness was irrelevant.

SITTING.

Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer. (Counsel)
Dr. M. C. Nanjunda Row. Mr. G. Narayaniah (Father.)

STANDING, (from left to right.)

Mr. M. Subraya Iyer; Mr. N. Chandra Sekara Iyer; Mr. S. V. Subramaniam and Mr. H. Sunder Rao, Bombay.

CHAPTER XII.

The Plaintiff's Evidence.

On the 28th of March, the plaintiff went into the witness box. He said that he was a retired Tahsildar, with a pension of Rs. 112-8-0 a month, and that he was in a position to maintain and educate the minors. He had had 10 children, and not 13, as stated by the defendant. Five of his children were living, and none had died from neglect or ill-treatment. He had ancestral property as well as his pension. He had been a member of the Theosophical Society since 1882, and he took the pledge of the Esoteric Section in the time of Madame Blavatsky, and he had looked upon Mrs. Besant as a spiritual teacher, and had had great reverence and respect for her. He was a Hindu, and he wished his sons to be brought up as Hindus. He had gone to Adyar in January, 1909, as Assistant Secretary of the Esoteric Section, and he had lived there in a building a little outside the Society's compound. With him had been his four sons, an orphan nephew, two other boys, who had been left with him to be educated, and his brother-in-law and sister-in-law. His eldest son was at that time going to the Presidency College and was now in the M. B. and C. M. class, in the Medical College. Krishnamurthi and Nityananda had been sent to the P. S. High School in Mylapore. In 1909 he had heard vague reports about Mr. Leadbeter, but he had not read anything about that gentleman, and when Mrs. Besant recommended the re-admission of Mr. Lead-

beter into the Theosophical Society, witness had voted for it. Mrs. Besant had said that Mr. Leadbeter was innocent, and at that time witness had believed it. Witness had not been paid for his services at Adyar, but he had had a cottage free. Over and above being Assistant Secretary of the Esoteric Section, he had had the charge of the plantations and the cultivation, and of a dairy and a bakery. Not being satisfied, he had removed the boys, in 1909, from the Mylapore School, intending to give them private instruction, as he was a certificated teacher. It was not true that he had left the boys uncared for, or that he had neglected them as to body and mind. Lessons were afterwards given to the boys by Mr. Leadbeter, Mr. Clarke, Mr. S. V. Subramaniam and himself. In September, when the boys left the Mylapore School, Krishnamurthi was in the third form and Nityananda was in the fourth, the younger boy being in the higher form. In December, 1909, Mrs. Besant had spoken to him about the boys, and she had said that it would be well to stop them from going to school altogether, and that she would arrange for their education. She suggested sending the boys to an English University, and he agreed to it. Mrs. Besant told him then that something very good and great was coming regarding the elder boy, and when he enquired what it would be, she replied "You will know," and she asked him not to place any obstacles in the way of Mr. Leadbeter, and he promised not to do so. In December the boys slept in Mrs. Besant's room, while she was at Benares, but they took their meals

with their father, as usual. Witness went to Benares for the Convention in December, 1909, and returned to Adyar in January, 1910, and he did not know what took place at the "initiation," further than that Mr. Leadbeter and the elder boy were closed up in a room. He thought it was Mrs. Besant's room. Mrs. Besant returned to Adyar in 1910, and then she put a draft form of guardianship into his hands and asked him to go through it and sign it. He kept it for some days, and she asked him about the document, and he said that he was not prepared to sign it. Some time after that Sir Subramania Iyer came to him and asked what the difficulty was regarding the document and he said that he did not like to sign such a document. Then Mrs. Besant went to him, and asked whether he believed in "the Masters?" He said "yes." She said "Dont you believe that I am in communication with the Master? You take me to be your spiritual teacher. I know you wont give me any difficulties, but difficulties may arise, after your death, with your relations. So I want that letter." He inserted in the draft that Mrs. Besant should be guardian after his life-time. Mrs. Besant objected to his stating "after my life-time," and wanted him to constitute her as guardian immediately, It was stated in the letter that she alone should be the guardian of the boys, and he did not give her power to transfer the guardianship. The last clause "I do not give you power to transfer the guardianship" was written by him. His object in constituting Mrs. Besant as guardian was that the boys might have a good education. He

did not consent that the elder boy should become or should be trained as a religious teacher. The letter of guardianship was dated March 6, 1910.

Afterwards Mrs. Besant went away to Benares, he did not remember exactly when. But she was not at Adyar when, one morning, he saw Nityananda standing outside Mr. Leadbeter's bungalow, and he asked where Krishna was. Nitya told him that Krishna was inside. The doors of Mr. Leadbeter's room were all shut. (Here witness wrote on a piece of paper what he alleges that he saw, after opening the door, and he handed the paper to His Lordship). He said to Mr. Leadbeter " you filthy brute," and he took his boy's hand and came out. He had no talk with Mr. Leadbeter beyond the use of that expression.

About two days later, witness had a violent quarrel with Mr. Leadbeter, whom he found in the room of the boys, namely Mrs. Besant's room at head-quarters. The exact dates for these things he could not fix.

Mrs. Besant said in reply to a question from His Lordship that she received a telegram from Mr. Leadbeter, and a second telegram from Sir Subramania Iyer and the plaintiff, on the 19th of April. The telegram from Mr. Leadbeter said " Antares (Mr. Narayaniah) is making trouble. Please come down." The joint telegram from Sir Subramania Iyer and the plaintiff said " Dont be anxious, everything is all right." Mrs. Besant had not kept the telegrams, but she said that the gist of them was as she stated to His Lordship. Continuing, witness said that the day after the quarrel,

he wanted to take his sons away from Adyar, but Sir Subramania Iyer (the Vice-President of the Theosophical Society, who had been sent for to settle the quarrel) advised him to wait for the return of Mrs. Besant. Mr. Clarke (a resident) was keeping a watch over him, and following him everywhere, and trying to induce him by words not to go away. He wrote at that time a long letter (this letter was not produced in Court) to Mr. Wadia, the manager of the "*Theosophist*" office. Mrs. Besant returned in the beginning of May, 1910, and the plaintiff said that he had then complained to her of what he had seen, and he had told her that his boys must not go to Mr. Leadbeter's bath room or associate with him any longer, and Mrs. Besant had said that she would arrange for separate bath-rooms, and that the lessons of the boys should be given in her presence, on the verandah. This was done. Prior to this the boys had had no separate bath room. Continuing, witness said that in January, 1911, he spoke to Mrs. Besant concerning something that he had been told about while she was away from Adyar, something that her servant Lakshman had reported to some of the Adyar residents, including Mr. Wadia and Mr. Schwartz, and she then promised to take the boys with her to England. This she did in March, and Mr. Leadbeter remained at Adyar, and the boys were away until October. He had given the boys a number of threads to be replaced at intervals, and he wrote to Mrs. Besant to ask if the boys were wearing the threads.

His Lordship asked :—

"You are a Hindu, and you want the boys to be Hindus ?"

Witness replied :—

"Yes, my Lord."

The boys returned to Advar in October, and afterwards Mrs. Besant told witness that they were making very rapid progress spiritually, and that she would leave them at Ootacamund with Mr. Leadbeter when she returned to England in February, 1912, as they were about to make an advance in their course after "initiation." Witness objected, but Mrs. Besant told him not to be silly and said that the boys were growing. He wrote a long letter to Mrs. Besant, and gave it to Krishna to give to her, but Krishna returned the letter unopened, saying that Mrs. Besant was very busy and he would have a talk with her. Witness had no further conversation with Mrs. Besant about the "initiation." There was some difficulty about the journey to Benares in December, 1911, Mrs. Besant saying that witness might go in a reserved carriage with his sons and others, and Krishna saying that Mr. Leadbeter did not wish it. Finally he followed his sons alone to Benares. There witness saw Mr. Bhagavan Das, and had a long talk with him, and asked him to persuade Mrs. Besant to separate his sons from Mr. Leadbeter. Mr. Bhagavan Das was the General Secretary of the Indian Section, and is Honorary Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Central Hindu College, and witness understood that he was in the confidence of Mrs. Besant.

At Benares witness had some difficulty in seeing his sons, and he wrote to Krishna, asking both boys to go to see him, and then he received a note from Mrs. Besant saying that the boys would not be allowed to go into the crowd—Mrs. Besant thought that their magnetism would be spoilt if they did so, or something of that sort. On the 31st of December witness had an interview with Mrs. Besant. He then told her that the boys must be completely separated from Mr. Leadbeter, and for the first time she refused, saying that Mr. Leadbeter and the boys had been together in past lives. She said, also, that Mr. Leadbeter was an Arhat, and on the verge of divinity, and that witness should not speak lightly of him. When Mrs. Besant refused to separate the boys from Mr. Leadbeter, witness told her that he would take legal action, and she said " Don't dash against a rock," and witness said again that he was determined to take action, if she did not accede to his demands. Witness returned to Adyar, and complained there to several persons, and a telegram was sent to Mrs. Besant by Mr. Wadia.

Mrs. Besant said, in reply to the Counsel for the plaintiff, that Mr. Wadia had wired to her on or about the 11th of January, saying that a warrant was likely to be applied for. She had not kept the telegram and she could not produce a copy of it.

Continuing, witness said that Mrs. Besant wrote to him from Benares, saying that she would take the boys to England, and speaking of the unnecessary expense that would thus have to be incurred, and

Subbiah Chetty wired to Mrs. Besant on the 15th of January :—

"No trouble if boys remain in Benares for study without Leadbeter."

On the 19th of January, when Mrs. Besant came to Adyar, she sent for witness and had a talk with him, and she asked if he had any objection to her taking the boys to England. Sir Subramania Iyer and four more people were present at the interview. He said that he had no objection. He did not know that the boys were to be taken to Mr. Leadbeter in Italy. He did not know that Mr. Leadbeter had been sent to Sicily to find a cool place for a particular ceremony. There was not a syllable of talk on that subject. After the conversation, he left the room, and he did not sign any document.

Witness then spoke about the statement signed by Lakshman, and his letters to Mrs. Besant on this subject, and of Mrs. Besant's letter to him, dated February 7, 1912, from the Indian Ocean. He said it was false to say that he had planned any deadly injury to his son, or that he had systematically starved and beaten his children, or that he had terrified them, or that he had stunted their growth by under-feeding. The statement made by Mrs. Besant that the loss of five children was an eloquent testimony to their home surroundings, was absolutely untrue. It was also untrue to say that he did not care for his children; on the contrary, he had the greatest affection for them. In spite of the promise made by Mrs. Besant in January 1912, she had taken the boys to Mr. Leadbeter. The

boys had had no education, but had been taken from place to place, and paraded. Their moral character had been undermined. Witness had heard that the elder boy was going to be Lord Maitreya, but he had never prostrated before his son, and no Hindu would do such a thing, unless his son was a *sanyasi*. He was not a member of the Order of the Star in the East. Witness said that he was being helped financially in conducting his suit, but it was a *bona fide* action, and his sole purpose in instituting it was the recovery of his boys.

After the luncheon hour, witness was cross-examined by Mrs. Besant.

Under cross-examination witness said that he had been a Tahsildar, and for a short time a Second Class Magistrate, and that in Law examination he had passed the (Higher) Criminal Test. Mrs. Besant then said that the support of a legal suit by private persons other than the parties concerned is an offence in law. (Counsel here undeceived her). Asked by Mrs. Besant if he objected to Mr. Jinaradasa, who was in charge of the boys in England, because he is a Buddhist, witness said he objected to that person not as Buddhist but as a man, and that he did not wish that person to interfere with his sons. Asked if on their return he would marry his sons in orthodox families, witness replied "By all means." Mrs. Besant said "Your orthodoxy is a little shaky now", and witness replied "It is not so bad as it was some years ago."

His Lordship remarked :—

"You mean it is not so strict as it was some years ago."

Mrs. Besant said:—

"That is quite true, my Lord."

Asked if he believed in the Masters, witness said that he had done so.

His Lordship said that questions as to beliefs were not relevant to the suit, and asked witness to say "yes" or "no", so as to shorten the proceedings. Mrs. Besant then referred to the document written about Krishnamurthi by Mrs. Taylor, and witness acknowledged having given the information in it, and he said that Mrs. Besant had told him that Krishnamurthi would become a great spiritual teacher. Asked if he thought that Mrs. Besant undertook all the expense of taking the boys to England, France and other countries with a view to train them for an ordinary profession, witness replied "I dont see anything hard in that." Having denied that at any time he had prostrated before his son, and being asked by Mrs. Besant what he would say if persons swore that he had done it, witness replied:—

"I dont care what they say. They are under your influence. I have never touched my son's feet with my hands or head."

Mrs. Besant went on to question witness concerning Mr. Leadbeter, and witness said that he gave his vote for the admission of Mr. Leadbeter into the Theosophical Society because the Secretary told him that Mrs. Besant wished it.

His Lordship asked:—

"You say you did not know about Leadbeter till he came to Adyar in 1909?"

Witness replied :—

"I had not heard of anything against him except vaguely".

When the Court met the following day, Mrs. Besant asked witness how it was that, if he knew nothing about Mr. Leadbeter, he had so many documents concerning that gentleman, and witness replied that he had collected these things since he left Adyar, that his brother had "*The Theosophic Voice*", and some of the information about Mr. Leadbeter had been sent to him anonymously.

Asked if Mrs. Besant had not paid 27 and 30 rupees a month for milk for the boys, witness said that the milk had been supplied to Mrs. Besant, but that he did not know who had drunk it.

Witness denied that in February, 1910, he had told Mrs. Besant that he had seen something "nasty" and that Nitya was shivering then outside Mr. Leadbeter's bungalow and that there had been at that time any conversation about Mr. Leadbeter, and he said that when he handed over the boys to Mrs. Besant in March, 1910, he had not the least suspicion concerning Mr. Leadbeter.

Afterwards Mrs. Besant questioned witness about what he alleged that he had seen in Mr. Leadbeter's bungalow, and a map of the bungalow was handed to His Lordship, also a picture of the room and the furniture in it. Asked why he had not complained at that time, witness said that there was none at Adyar then to whom he could say anything, none in whom he had

confidence, and when he was asked why he had not prosecuted Mr. Leadbeter, witness said :—

"I shall do that when I have evidence in full". Questioned about the trouble on the 18th of April, witness said :—

"I went to the bedroom of the boys and asked them whether they had taken food. Leadbeter came there at the same time, and he said that I had nothing to do with the boys, and I asked him to leave the room. The quarrel was not about food."

His Lordship told Mrs. Besant to question witness about her servant Lakshman, and witness said that Lakshman's story had been told to him in December, 1910, and that he had complained to Mrs. Besant on her return from Burma in February, 1911, and he said that his faith in Mrs. Besant had not been shaken until 1912, when she had told him that the boys could not be separated from Mr. Leadbeter, and that he had not objected to the boys being taught by Mr. Leadbeter, providing Mrs. Besant herself was present. As regards Krishnamurthi, witness said "He has committed no offence."

His Lordship asked :—

"When the boys come over here, what do you intend to do with them?"

Witness said :—

"I will give them the best education I can here." Continuing, witness said "I have some property and I am able to maintain my boys. I have my ancestral property. I have earned property since I retired. The

property in Valathur should be shared between myself and my brother. Apart from that I have independent property. I get about Rs. 30 a month for my share. My property in Madanapalli, which was worth about 10,000 rupees, is mortgaged for Rs. 1,000. I get there about sixty rupees a month. I have insured my life for ten thousand rupees, and I am paying every quarter rupees thirty for premium. On the average I get about Rs. 200 a month."

By His Lordship :—

Q.—"On the 31st December, 1911, you asked the defendant to separate the boys from Mr. Leadbeter ?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"You gave no reason at first ?"

A.—"Then I did not give any reason."

Q.—"Then you generally made enquiry of others. Why did you not tell the reason to the defendant herself and enquire of Lakshman?" (Mrs. Besant's servant.)

A.—"I thought it was not fair. I had told her what I had learned from other persons after her return from Burma in 1911."

Q.—"Why did you not state then that you were making enquiries ?"

A.—"Because I made no enquiries."

Q.—"You were making enquiries in December at Benares ?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"You did not mention about the Bhagavan Das enquiry ?"

A.—" No. I did not tell Mrs. Besant at that interview that I was making private enquiries."

Q.—" You gave her no reason for asking for the separation?"

A.—" I went to speak to her. At that interview I told her that I wanted to speak to her about that undesirable man, meaning thereby Leadbeter." She said, in reply "*Don't talk nonsense.*"*

Q.—" You did not give her reasons?"

A.—" We both understood the reasons."

Q.—" Mrs. Besant is frequently absent from Madras?"

A.—" Not very frequently, she went to England, and once she went to Burma and returned."

Q.—" Who was in charge of her establishment during her absence?"

A.—" There were several departments and there were several heads for those departments."

Q.—" There is no general manager at Adyar during the absence of Mrs. Besant?"

A.—" No."

Q.—" There are only heads of different departments?"

A.—" Yes."

Mr. S. V. Subramaniam, being examined as a witness for the plaintiff, said:—

" I am a gentleman with independent means, and a student of English and Sanskrit literature. My father was a Theosophist for 20 years, and I have been a

* The italics were put by the *Hindu*.

Theosophist and have lived at Adyar. I have known the plaintiff since I was four years old, for my father was a Head-master of the school at Cuddapah when Mr. Narayaniah was a Tahsildar. I knew the plaintiff at Adyar, and I taught his sons."

Asked in what style the plaintiff was living at Adyar, witness replied " He was living in an exceedingly good style."

Witness went on to say that on the 18th of April, 1910, there had been trouble at Adyar, and Mr. Narayaniah had wanted to take his sons away, and Mr. Wood and Mr. Clarke had received instructions from Mr. Leadbeter not to allow this, and witness had seen Mr. Wood carrying a big stick and had heard him say that he intended to knock Narayaniah's brains out. Mr. Leadbeter and Mr. Narayaniah had abused one another vilely, but the real reason for this had not been divulged. In May 1910, Mr. Narayaniah had told witness that he had seen something "nasty" with regard to Mr. Leadbeter, and he had made use of coarse expressions which witness would not disclose, unless requested to do so by His Lordship.

Asked by Mrs. Besant if he had not left Adyar because he had been found intolerable, witness said that he had left in the interests of the world's harmony, that he had had his suspicions concerning Mr. Leadbeter, but that he had never allowed them to interfere with the even course of friendship, and that even then he had for Mrs. Besant a considerable amount of affection.

CHAPTER XIII.

Lakshman's Evidence.

On the 1st of April, Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer, the Vakil for the plaintiff, submitted to His Lordship that Lakshman, the servant of Mrs. Besant, might be called as a Court witness, and he said that he was supported in this application by the defendant. The only other witness for the plaintiff was Mr. Schwartz, the Treasurer of the Theosophical Society, and his evidence would only have a bearing on the case and be relevant if Lakshman's evidence was recorded. Lakshman was said to have seen a particular act.

Mrs. Besant also joined in the prayer, and said she would be glad to have Lakshman called as a Court witness.

His Lordship granted the prayer and proceeded to examine Lakshman.

Witness said that he is a servant of Mrs. Besant. He had made a statement to Mr. Bhagavan Das. At Adyar, at 11 A.M. one morning, he went to the Round bungalow. He could not remember the date or whether it was hot or cold weather. It was about four years ago. It was not at the last Convention, it was four years ago. He went to Olcott Sahib's bungalow to call Leadbeter Sahib to breakfast and to bring the towel. (Mrs. Besant explained that the Round bungalow and the River bungalow are the same place and that witness referred to Mr. Leadbeter's residence) The door was shut on one side, and there was water on the other side, and he opened

the door where there is water. (Mrs. Besant suggested that witness perhaps meant the tank which existed formerly and where there is now the tennis court. The bungalow is apart from the room where people wash themselves. After opening the door witness did not go in. He saw Krishnamurthi and Leadbeter. Krishnamurthi's cloth was all down and it was wet also. Mr. Leadbeter's coat was to the waist only, and he had no pyjamas. Witness did not understand what is meant by a "sleeping coat". Krishnamurthi was standing in front of Mr. Leadbeter, and Leadbeter had one knee on a chair. There was a small table on Mr. Leadbeter's right hand, and the Sahib's hand was on Krishnamurthi's hair. When witness saw nakedness he could not say anything and he went back. A short time afterwards Mr. Leadbeter came to Mrs. Besant's place of meals, and Krishnamurthi put on proper cloths and went to another place for meals—witness could see Krishnamurthi do this from the place where he was then. Witness thought he had seen a sinful action, and he told Subbiah Chetty and other people, such as Ranga Reddi and so on. He told them that the people were senseless because they were without clothes. He told them this the following day. He said nothing more. Mr. Leadbeter did not speak to him. Leadbeter and Krishnamurthi did not see him.

Cross-examined by the Counsel for the plaintiff, witness said that he is still a servant of Mrs. Besant and he has never been dismissed by her. The event happened four years ago. There was no clothing on the boy's

body. His cloth was wet and he was holding it with one of his hands. Witness knew Babu Bhagavan Das, Pandit Bhavani Sankar, Babu Upendra Nath Basu, Babu Dhana Krishna and Miss Lilian Edger. Witness went to the Round bungalow to call Mr. Leadbeter at 11 A.M., when the rest had sat down for meals, it was his business to fetch those people who were not there. He went to fetch Mr. Leadbeter's towel from the bath room, the towel used to wipe the hands after washing before eating, and to wipe the hands after washing after eating. Mr. Leadbeter had no servant at that time and witness did this small service for him. He had not expected Mr. Leadbeter to be in the bath room when he went there to fetch the towel. In the hurry he thought of calling Mr. Leadbeter and of fetching the towel at the same time. Seeing the door of the big room shut, he ran on to the bath room.

Q.—" If you do not find them in the big room, you do not rush to the bath room ? "

A.—" When I find them in the big camera, I call them for meals and go and fetch the towel. When I dont find them there, I go to the bath room and fetch the towel and go upstairs to Mrs. Besant to the *puja* place."

Questioned concerning Krishnamurthi's bathing arrangements, witness said that the boy bathed two or three times a day, at 5 A. M., before meal time, at 10 or 11 A. M., and before *puja* time. The boy had a separate bath room, but that day he was bathing in Mr. Leadbeter's bath room, and witness was surprised to find

them together there, and naked. It is considered a sinful act for Hindus to bathe completely naked, and through shame he did not call Mr. Leadbeter but he went away. As soon as the incident occurred, he told Schwartz Sahib that he had seen two people naked and that it was a bad thing. He had not told Wadia at that time, but Wadia might have been present when he told Schwartz, he could not recollect. He did not speak to Mrs. Besant then, only later on, when she questioned him. He did not think that Mr. Leadbeter was doing a wrong thing, but that being naked was a bad thing.

Q.—"You thought it was a thing which ought not to be allowed?"

A.—"What I thought was, one was a small boy and the other was a big man. Krishnamurthi had a great name or fame. If other people should see that, what would they think?"

Q.—"So you thought that the man with the great name and Mr. Leadbeter ought not to be together in that situation?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"And you communicated your feelings to those whom you met?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"You knew that Krishnamurthi was being brought up by Mrs. Besant?"

A,—"Yes."

Q.—"Did you or did you not conceive it to be your duty as the personal attendant of Mrs. Besant to communicate this matter to her?"

A.—" I did think it was my duty to communicate it to Mrs. Besant."

Q.—" In the hope or expectation that such a thing would not be allowed to recur? "

A.—" I thought it should be communicated to Mrs. Besant, who would take the necessary steps to tell these people that they should not remain without cloths."

Q.—" Did you tell her ? "

A.—" I did not tell. I was ashamed."

Witness said that at Benares he had been asked by Mrs. Besant about this thing, he could not remember when, but it was some time before the last Convention took place. After that Mrs. Besant went to England. His feeling of shame lasted for three years, and he did not speak to Mrs. Besant about this thing until she questioned him. He did not tell Miss. Edger about this thing. When he spoke in Upendranath Babu's garden about this thing, Miss. Edger was not there, God knows where she was then, but he did not speak in her presence. He had met Dhana Krishna Babu on the way to Upendra Babu's house and Dhana Krishna had told him to tell the truth, God witnessing.

Q.—" Did anything take place between you and Dhana Krishna ? "

A.—" No."

Q.—" He suddenly came to you and said " Speak the truth, God witnessing it ? "

A.—" Yes."

Q.—" That terminated the conversation ? "

A.—" Yes."

Q.—" You did not even promise to tell the truth?"

A.—" No."

Witness went on to say that he had told Bhagavan Das the same as he had said in Court, and that he had said then that the thing had taken place two or three years previously. He could not fix either the year or the month, but he thought Subbiah Chetty would remember when he spoke to him about the thing. Witness denied having said, " Satya nashya, Dharma nashya " (Truth is lost, Dharma is lost), and when asked by Counsel if he was prepared to swear by Gangaji that he did not come out of the bath-room saying " Satya nashya, Dharma nashya," he replied :—

" I did swear."

Cross-examined by Mrs. Besant, witness said he remembered meeting her four years ago in Bombay and going with her to Adyar, but he did not remember how long he had stayed then at Adyar, only that he had gone from Adyar with Mrs. Besant to Benares for the Convention. Mrs. Besant took her breakfast at Adyar in a room about the side of Subbiah Chetti's room, with another lady, Leadbeter, and no one else—yes, Bhagavan Das was also there. Four Conventions had taken place since he saw the thing. To see Krishnamurthi without a cloth and Mr. Leadbeter in a kurti had shocked him very much, but he had said nothing to Mrs. Besant. He had never seen anything in Mrs. Besant's bath room. He had not seen the butler Thiruvadi after he had seen that thing. He had never been dismissed by Mrs. Besant.

Q.—" Did you say that you made a thumb mark on the paper of Mr. Gurtu ?"

A.—" He put my thumb mark on that paper and I wrote my name and put my thumb mark as well."

Q.—" Did you put your thumb mark only to show that your name was right ?"

A.—" I was being asked ".

His Lordship said :—

" Had you any ink on your thumb and did you put it on that paper ?"

Witness replied.

" There was ink on my thumb as well. "

Mrs. Besant explained that it was a written statement * that she had taken from witness. She wished to file this statement as an Exhibit and she said that it had been filed in the Interlocutory Motion. His Lordship said that the Registrar would look for the statement, and he directed the witness to wait. The statement having been found, Lakshman was recalled and his statement was filed by Mrs. Besant. Witness said that the signature was his signature.

Examined by the Counsel for the plaintiff, Lakshman said that he did not find his thumb mark on the document. He remembered having put his thumb mark, but he did not see it, and he did not remember whether he had put his thumb mark on that paper. He had told His Lordship that there had been ink on his

* This statement is given in Chapter 5, in Mr Narayaniah's letter to Mrs. Besant.

thumb and that he had put his thumb mark, but he could not remember. He had been very excited on the day when his statement was taken and he might have put his thumb mark on any paper that Mrs. Besant had taken from him. His name was on the statement.

Q.—" Did you put your thumb mark on any paper that day ?"

A.—" No. I do not think there was necessity for it."

Q.—" Two years ago your memory must have been better than it is now ?"

A.—" Yes ".

Q.—" Do you remember having made a statement to Babu Bhagavan Das that you made a thumb mark ?"

A.—" I dont remember if I put my thumb mark, but I made the statement ".

Q.—" Did you say this morning " I wrote my name and put my thumb mark as well ?"

A.—" I may have ".

Q.—" You said " There was ink on my thumb." Did you recollect this or did you guess ?"

A.—" I do not know ".

Q.—" Has your memory changed for the better or the worse within a quarter of an hour ?"

A.—" Even then I was in doubt ".

Examined by the Counsel for the plaintiff, Mr. A. Schwartz said that he is treasurer of the Theosophical Society, a member of the Esoteric Section and of the Order of the Star in the East. Lakshman spoke to him about three years ago, he could not say more definitely

when. Lakshman had told him that he had seen some questionable conduct of Leadbeter's with regard to the boys, and Mr. Wadia had spoken to him about the same thing afterwards. Witness did not remember whether he had spoken on the subject to Mrs. Besant, or not. He might have done so if she asked him, but he could not recollect.

The evidence of Mr. Bhagavan Das, taken before the Commissioner, was then read by the Counsel for the plaintiff, in so far as it concerned the statements made to him by Lakshman. Mr. Bhagavan Das said :—

" Mr. Narayaniah told me in course of conversation that not only he, but the servant of Mrs. Besant, one Lakshman, had also seen a similar incident and had spoken of it at that time to various residents at Adyar, and Mr. Narayaniah very urgently requested me to question Lakshman also. I sent for him to my house a day or two later. He came late in the night and I had only a very brief talk with him. I asked him if he had ever seen any improper conduct on the part of Mr. Leadbeter. He said once in the previous year Mrs. Besant was being delayed for her meal and he had gone looking for something, a towel I think he mentioned, and on opening the door he saw Mr. Leadbeter standing with a leg on a chair or sofa or some such thing and the elder boy was sitttng on his knee and both were naked and that on seeing this he suddenly fell back, That was all that he told me. He further said that he had spoken at the time to various Adyar residents."

In connection with this Lakshman told me that he had spoken to Mr. Schwartz and Mr. Subbiah and he did not pronounce the name of Mr. Schwartz. But by his description I understood it to be Mr. Schwartz. I asked Mr. Subbiah Chetty about this and he said that Lakshman had spoken to him about it.

In his evidence given before the Commissioner, Pandit Bhavani Sankar said that in March, 1912, Lakshman came to the garden house of Babu Upendra Nath Basu, at 1 P.M., and Upendra Basu questioned him about the statement he had signed, and he said that a few days before the Convention of 1910 he had seen an event in Mrs. Besant's bath room, to which place he had gone to fetch a lota. He had seen Mr. Leadbeter and Krishnamurthi without any clothes and standing behind one another. He had gone out of the room muttering "Satynash ho gaya" and "Dhama ka nash ho gaya," and he had seen Thiruvedi, Col. Olcott's old servant, smiling. When he made this statement before Mrs. Besant, she threw down her pen in anger, and she asked him if Mr. Leadbeter was combing Krishnamurthi's hair. And he said "no." He went away after giving this statement. He said this took place before the Convention of 1910. Lakshman was not sent for by Upendra Babu, he came of his own accord. Lakshman said that Mrs. Besant had taken down a statement from him and that he had put his thumb mark to it. He said that Pandit Gurtu translated for Mrs. Besant, and Mrs. Besant took down the statement. The document shown to witness was not in Mrs.

Besant's handwriting, and he could not find the thumb mark spoken to by Lakshman on the document.

Mr. D. K. Biswas gave before the Commissioner very much the same evidence as Pandit Bhavani Sankar, having been present when Lakshman spoke to Babu Upendra Nath Basu in Upendra Babu's garden-house.

Mrs. Besant asked :—

"Lakshman said I bit my pen. It was a fountain pen. Do people generally bite fountain pens?"

Witness replied :—

"Lakshman never said about a fountain pen. He simply said "biting her pen". Lakshman did not know the year, but I understood him to mean 1910. As the question was of public interest, I think that an honest enquiry into the matter was not an unusual proceeding. I wanted to help Mr. Narayaniah to rescue his sons, and not to ruin Krishnmurthi, as suggested by Mrs. Besant."

The evidence of Mrs. Besant's steward at Benares, Ambika Kanta Chakravarty, having been read, giving dates concerning the movements of Mrs. Besant's servant, Lakshman, during 1909,—10-11-12, the plaintiff's case closed, and the Court adjourned for lunch.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mrs. Besant in the Witness-box.

On the same day, when the Court reassembled after the luncheon interval, Mrs. Besant opened her defence. She said that she would argue only the question of

evidence and that she would deal with the law points in her closing address. She was not as learned as her learned friend on the opposite side, and she would ask His Lordship to be good enough to correct her, if she went wrong. She would put in evidence to show that the plaintiff had never taken any pledge from her, and that he had never been admitted into the Esoteric Section. She did not deny that she exercises a very large influence over a great many people in the world, but she said that her influence deals only with spiritual matters and it has never been strained to deal with the family matters of any person who regards her as his teacher. There was no pledge obtaining in the Esoteric School before 1911, when she made an inner circle and called it the Esoteric Section, and the plaintiff had never taken this pledge, only the moral pledge that had previously been in existence. The plaintiff had lived in the compound of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, and she had a right, as President of the Society, to expel anyone to whom she objected. A large number of students reside at the head-quarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar—men and women desiring to study Theosophy. These persons must be between 20 and 40 years of age, and members of the Society known to the defendant or to the General Secretary of the Society. Mrs. Besant wished to put in evidence from residents to show the sort of people who are permitted to reside at Adyar, in order to prove that persons of immoral character are not admitted there.

The Counsel for the plaintiff said that he had let in specific evidence of a particular person only. And His Lordship ruled that the evidence of general reputation was irrelevant.

Mrs. Besant then explained that the River bungalow, in which Mr. Leadbeter has been living since 1909, has four doors, and there are many pathways round it, and residents and servants are constantly passing and re-passing, and Mr. Leadbeter is engaged in writing and has with him two or three Secretaries. The boys were introduced to Mr. Leadbeter by their father on the sea shore in 1909, and at that time they knew very little English and were extremely timid. Afterwards they went at 6 A.M., to Mr. Leadbeter for their lessons. In November 1909, plaintiff told Mrs. Besant that he had seen something nasty, and she understood this to be bathing without a cloth. Her servant had spoken to the fact that it is shocking for any Hindu to bathe naked. Mr. Leadbeter had advised the boys to bathe without a cloth for purposes of cleanliness, and she had spoken to him on the subject and had asked him not to interfere with the Indian prejudice. At 5-30 A.M. Mr. Leadbeter had never been alone with the boys. In December 1909, the boys had been in the Shrine room with Mrs. Besant from 5-45 A.M. till 6 A.M., when they had changed their clothes and had gone out for exercise.

His Lordship asked Mrs. Besant not to go into details.

Mrs. Besant submitted that she wanted to prove that the boys had not been alone with Mr. Leadbeter in

the early morning, and she filed letters from the elder minor to show that he and his brother had been in the Shrine room at that time, and not with Mr. Leadbeter. Mrs. Besant went on to speak of the "initiation" ceremony; and His Lordship thought that she need not go into details as the only question put to the plaintiff was whether he was aware of any "initiation".

Mrs. Besant said there was no doubt that the father had known about the "initiation", and that he had understood that the elder boy had been given into the hands of Mr. Leadbeter and herself for the purpose of religious education. The plaintiff had not complained at the time of the "initiation", but at that time he had been on good terms with Mr. Leadbeter, who had given him advice in his family troubles. Plaintiff was subject to violent fits of anger, sometimes even in small matters, and on the 19th of April, 1910, he lost his temper and threatened to take away the boys. That was the only trouble Mrs. Besant knew about. She had never delegated the guardianship of the minors to anyone.

His Lordship said it would probably hasten proceedings if Mrs. Besant went into the witness-box, and spoke there to all these things; and before doing so, Mrs. Besant said that she would like to draw His Lordship's attention to the fact that Mr. Leadbeter had at one time been a tutor and a writer for the *Pioneer*, and that he is a very pure man. He admitted having given certain advice to three boys in America in 1904, but he had promised not to give such advice again. Mrs. Besant then went into the witness-box, where she was solemnly

affirmed. His Lordship offered her a chair; but this she declined, saying that she preferred to stand.

In her examination by the Counsel for the plaintiff, witness said that she is the head of the Esoteric Section and the Esoteric School, consisting of a certain number of the members of the Theosophical Society, and that these members take special pledges of obedience to herself, but that the plaintiff had never taken such pledges. The Esoteric Section was established in the summer of 1911, and the first Indian members took their pledges in September of that year. She had refused many persons whom she thought to be unfit, and the pledge was purely voluntary. Mrs. Besant then filed a plan of the River bungalow, to show the exact position of Mr. Leadbeter's room, and the position of the furniture in it, and she said that she had never seen the wooden doors shut, and that the whole of the interior of the room is visible by people who are constantly passing and re-passing. The sofa spoken about by the plaintiff has a high back and it is impossible to see anyone on it unless one puts one's head into the room. In August, 1910, Mrs. Besant had suggested to Mr. Leadbeter to take a room on the first floor of the main building, owing to the great publicity of the River bungalow and on account of his literary work.

Resuming her evidence the following day, Mrs. Besant said that her servant Lakshman has been with her many years, and he is a good-hearted man, but he has a careless tongue. Lakshman is a Sudra by caste. Mr. Leadbeter is a Paraya, and therefore he cannot

enter the Indian dining room, and he takes his morning meal with her, when she is at Adyar. Witness takes her food in the Indian way, and she takes no evening meal. In February, 1910, the plaintiff told her that he had seen Nitya shivering on the verandah outside Mr. Leadbeter's room, and that the boy had said that Krishna was inside, and that plaintiff had then seen something nasty. He refused to say what he had seen, and he told witness not to speak about it to Mr. Leadbeter, because he had great respect for that gentleman. That was the only thing she had heard until December, 1911, and then she had spoken to Mr. Leadbeter and had asked him if he had washed one of the boys. Nothing more had been said by her then to Mr. Leadbeter. Witness had taken Krishnamurthi because he had been "initiated". She took both the boys, and she trained the elder as a spiritual teacher and the younger boy she intended to train for the I. C. S., so that he might help the elder boy with money and also his parent.

The following passages from Mrs. Besant's written statement were then taken as evidence. "The defendant states that she returned to Adyar on April 24, 1910, and at once enquired into the trouble that had occurred. The plaintiff answered her that he had no idea really of taking the boys away, but that he had been much excited because Leadbeter kept them too much from him. He said he had no complaint to make except this, and only asked her that the boys should be allowed to be more with himself. She promised to meet his wishes as to this, as far as was consistent with their proper education.

No difficulty arose with the plaintiff, who seemed very pleased with his sons' progress, but who several times expressed his regret that the defendant had not left them in England permanently.

The defendant states that she had taken her passage to England on February 10, 1912, but, hastened her departure by a week, and left on February 3, in order to remove her wards as quickly as possible from India where they might hear of the scandal created. Defendant states that it is absolutely false that she is aware of any evil practices of Mr. Leadbeter . . . .

The plaintiff left the boys after that in the company of Mr. Leadbeter without protection, and without protest to their guardian until January, 1912, and remained on terms of amity with Mr. Leadbeter.

The boys are now under the protection of the widow of the Right Hon'ble Jacob Bright, M. P. P. C., and of her daughter."

Continuing, Mrs. Besant said that Sir Subramania Iyer was in charge of the head-quarters of the Theosophical Society during her absence in April 1910; and she denied that after her return to Adyar at that time any change was made in the arrangements for the boys. Witness then went into details regarding the visits of the boys to England and elsewhere, and she said that the plaintiff made no further complaints, but that on her return from England, in 1911, he seemed to be very much troubled. When she spoke to him in November of that year, she might perhaps have told him that she would

take the boys to Ooty for three months seclusion with Mr. Leadbeter in April, or May, 1912, but at that time he raised no objection. On the 31st of December he came to her in a very excited mood and told her roughly that he would separate the boys from Mr. Leadbeter, and she refused then to agree to the separation because he gave no reasons for it. Plaintiff then said that he had been made to do something to "cast me off," but he would not say who was forcing him to do this, and he referred witness to Mrs. van Hook. After a conversation with Mrs. van Hook, witness decided to take the boys away, and she sent Mr. Leadbeter to look for a place in Sicily.

Three days later, witness went to Calcutta, and there she had a letter from Mr. Wadia, but she had not kept that letter. At Adyar, on 19th January 1912, she had seen the plaintiff in the presence of Sir Subramania Iyer, and others, and then the plaintiff had denied having told her that he had seen something nasty. Sir Subramania Iyer had then asked plaintiff if he had any objection to the boys going to England. Plaintiff had said that the boys must be separated from Mr. Leadbeter. Witness had said that they were separated, as a matter of fact, for the moment, but that she would not promise for the future. Plaintiff had said that he had no objection to the boys being with Mr. Leadbeter if witness were there too. Witness had said again that she would make no promise for the future. A document was then written, (this will be found in the Appendix) and signed by Sir Subramania

Iyer, Sitharama Sastriar, G. Subramania Chetty, Runga Reddi and Wadia.

Witness went on to speak of the statement signed by Lakshman, and said that she took it down in English and she asked Mr. Gurtu to write the essential parts in Hindi.

Witness did not deny the letter of February 6, 1912, written from the Indian Ocean, and she said that the statements made in that letter were true statements. She spent April, May, June, and part of July, in Sicily, and then returned to England and kept the boys in a country house there, and she made arrangements for a better house for the minors during the winter. She has entered their names in an Oxford College for October, 1914, and they have been accepted by the Chief of the College. She has spent up to date Rs. 27,000 on the boys and she has provided Rs. 10,000 a year for them in England, and she has secured a house in Benares for Krishnamurthi. By her will the boys will receive not less than £ 400 a year, and she has made for them a further provision of £ 200 a year, so their welfare is being well looked after.

In reply to questions put by the Counsel for the plaintiff, Mrs. Besant said that she is in communication with the Masters, and that a Master is a superhuman personage living in Tibet. She has been connected with Mr. Leadbeter in spiritual work, and she has published with him several books. Krishnamurthi has been associated with Mr. Leadbeter in many past lives. Plaintiff had been treated as a member of the Esoteric

Section although he had never taken the pledges. Sir Subramania Iyer is a member of the Esoteric Section as well as the Esoteric School, and he is a great admirer of Mr. Leadbeter. Mrs. Besant admitted that she was being financed by other parties in the suit, and she said that helping the defence in litigation is not an offence, only helping the prosecution. Mrs. Besant had not been aware before 1906 that Mr. Leadbeter held certain opinions on certain subjects and had given certain advice, and he had then told her that he had learnt these things from the Church of England. She had told him at that time that he had made a bad blunder, but she had remained his personal friend, although she had thought he was wrong. He had given certain advice only to bad boys, and he had promised not to give that advice again. Mrs. Besant asserted that she had been present at the "initiation" of Krishnamurthi, although her body had not been there, and that she knew all about it. It was on account of the "initiation" that she had taken charge of the minors. She thought the father understood this because there must have been some motive for taking the boys to England. She had refused to take other boys. The letter of guardianship being a purely legal document, she had not mentioned in it her reasons for taking the boys, and there was no legal statement made regarding their future career; but she thought that the father of the boys had clearly understood matters, and that he had known that the boys were to be under the guardianship of Mr. Leadbeter and herself. Sir Subramania Iyer, a late Judge of the Madras High

Court, had drawn up the letter of the father in which he had constituted her as guardian of his sons. The plaintiff had never demanded the separation of his sons from Mr. Leadbeter before December 1911, and then he had come to her crying, and, without giving any reason, had demanded the separation, and she had refused to grant his request because he had given no reason for it. It was true that she had said that Leadbeter and the boys had been together in previous lives and that therefore she could not separate them.

The Counsel for the plaintiff then put the following question.

Q.—" You knew that in December 1911 the plaintiff was dissatisfied with Leadbeter ?"

A.—" I knew it. He was often complaining about it. In order to make my position clear, I took down that statement. I took it down on the points I wanted legally. It does not represent all that took place. He said that he had no objection to the boys being with Leadbeter in my presence. He then asked me to promise that they should not see him when I am away. I said 'I will not promise as to the future.' I don't remember anything else. There was one other thing. Sir S. Subramanya Iyer said 'Are you satisfied ?' 'Do you want anything more ?' He said 'No', *i. e.*, yes'. That was the end of the conversation. I knew from Mrs. van Hook in Benares that he made complaint about Lakshman and also from Babu Bhagavan Das. I was anxious that it should be cleared up. The meeting on 19-1-1912 was to clear up. It was not put in writing because I

was concerned with only one thing, taking the boys to England. He did not withdraw his charges. I only asked him whether he had spoken to me about it. He said no. He said quite frankly he had not told me. I did not pursue it because I disbelieved it and that is why I did not ask him. I knew he was telling falsehood. I did not think it necessary to get his statement of the case, not in the least. Neither did I ask him about Lakshman's matter. I asked the other gentlemen whether they knew about it prior to my knowing it. I received a letter at Calcutta from Wadia regarding what plaintiff told me. He wrote that plaintiff was spreading it about Adyar and that he was using my servant's statement in support of his own. It was a long letter. I was not sure where I should take the boys at that time. I did not change my arrangements after I spoke to Narayaniah. I was sure Leadbeter would meet the boys and I sent him to look for a place. I finished my business and went back to Benares."

Being questioned about the statement that she had taken from her servant Lakshman, Mrs. Besant said:—

"I wrote some English notes. I have not preserved them. I know Hindi fairly well. I thought it best that some Indian gentlemen should be present when I questioned Lakshman. I am positive that Lakshman signed the document. (A copy of Lakshman's statement will be found in Chapter V). I knew Krishna was naked. It was not taken down; I knew it. Lakshman did not give any date. I did not press him for the date because the plaintiff said it was in

February, 1910. I took it to be a record. It never struck me to take down the date. He said it was before the Convention. He did not tell me that it was during the Convention of 1910. Lakshman did not refer to the incident as having taken place at the time Bhagavan Das was at Adyar. I did not make enquiries. I did not question Mr. Leadbeter because I did not suspect him. The only thing I was concerned with was why it should have been "nasty." I afterwards knew that Mr. Leadbeter had only his shirt on. I enquired of Mr. Leadbeter later and he told me that they were in the bathroom. This all happened in the autumn of 1909."

Mrs. Besant admitted that at meetings, of the Esoteric Section she had said that Krishnamurthi's body will be used by Lord Maitreya. She had not said so publicly. She believes Lord Maitreya and Lord Christ are one. She has said that Lord Maitreya was there embodying Himself in "His Chosen," and that "His Chosen" is Krishnamurthi. This was on account of a meeting at which Krishnamurthi was overshadowed. Master Jesus and Lord Maitreya, or Lord Christ, are not the same. She believes that the body of Krishnamurthi will be used some years hence by Lord Maitreya. The elder boy will lead the life of *Sanyasin*. Mrs. Besant will not interfere, but she feels sure that Krishnamurthi will not marry. As Nitya is another initiate, he may not marry.

The Counsel for the plaintiff then put the following questions.

Q.—"Did the father consent to this at any time, knowing that they will not marry?"

A.—"I believe he knew it. He knew it, but I never explained to him that giving over the boys meant that they ought not to marry. I think he did understand it. If I had thought it was necessary to explain to him, I would have done it. As Initiates, no sexual activity is possible. If what is said had happened, it is impossible that the boy should be as he is. He could not have it. If he could have had it, he could never have consented to it. All the *sexual impulse* lay *behind*."

Q.—"Is there any book which says this?"

A.—"You will find it in the writings of Sri Sankara Charya. After the Sanyasa state a man leaves his attachment to the world."

Q.—"Is there any particular name for initiation?"

A.—"There is "Kutichaka, Bahuduka."

Q.—"Is it or is it not the fact that they apply to Sanyasis?"

A.—"They have to be beyond Sanyasihood for this. I suppose he knew them to be Sanyasis."

Q.—"If they are to be celibates, what is the point about provison being made?"

A.—"Even celibates have to eat and live and dress."

Mrs. Besant went on to say that there is no legal document, but it is in the Resolution book that her house at Benares is to belong to Krishnamurthi for his lifetime. She had not the document in Court, but in the Resolution

book of the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society this fact is recorded. Her expenses regarding the boys have been very heavy, especially in travelling and in building up their bodies at Sandow's. They have been very well dressed. She spent two or three thousand rupees on their father's house at Adyar—her private money—and this house now belongs to the Theosophical Society. She keeps no accounts of her private expenditure. She draws from ten to twelve thousand rupees a year as a regular income from the Theosophical publishing house in London. She is willing to spend 10,000 rupees a year and more on the minors. Mrs. Besant could not say how many copies of Krishnamurthi's photographs have been sold. The education of the boys had not been interfered with by Krishnamurthi's headship of the Order of the Star in the East, Mrs. Besant said, as others, answer his letters and will continue to do so until he leaves Oxford. She has drawn a distinction between Krishnamurthi becoming a Christ and the yielding of his body for the Great Being. Souls are not interchangeable; but a higher Being can use the body of a man.

CHAPTER XV.

The Evidence for the Defence.

Mrs. van Hook said, under examination by Mrs. Besant, that she became a resident at Adyar in October, 1909, and after that time she went every morning, with

Mrs. Russak, to the River bungalow, with milk and toast, and remained with Mr. Leadbeter from 5-30 A.M. to 6-30 A.M., and that she had not failed to perform that pleasant duty each morning until May, 1910, excepting while Mr. Leadbeter was at the Seven Pagodas. At 6 A.M. the boys came to Mr. Leadbeter's room, and afterwards they went out for exercise. The wooden doors of Mr. Leadbeter's room are always open, only the wire doors are closed. Witness's son is under the care of Mr. Leadbeter for the development of character. She knew the plaintiff well, and she had been friendly with him, as he was the father of two of the boys, who were being educated by Mr. Leadbeter, and she is the mother of the third boy. In December 1911, at Benares, witness had seen the plaintiff looking very depressed and had asked him what was the matter, and he had told her that he was harassed by people with regard to his sons and that the ceremony (the distribution of certificates described in Chapter V) would make the boy the laughing stock of India. He had told witness "I believed in Leadbeter and now I have no confidence in him." He had spoken then of the incident that he alleged to have seen in Mr. Leadbeter's room (here witness handed to His Lordship something written on a bit of paper); and witness had afterwards repeated to Mrs. Besant what plaintiff had told her.

Cross-examined by the Counsel for the plaintiff, witness said that she had (being a medical woman) discussed with her husband, Dr. van Hook, a certain sexual practice, and her husband had published a

pamphlet. She is a great friend of Mr. Leadbeter, and in 1907 she discussed with him an actual case from the medical point of view. As a medical woman witness thought that Mr. Leadbeter had done the best he could in the two cases in which his aid had been asked for. Witness has taken a pledge in the Esoteric Section, and she regards Mr. Leadbeter as one of the greatest spiritual teachers.

Mr. George Arundale, being examined by Mrs. Besant, said that he is the Principal of the Central Hindu College, and a Government Inspector, and he is connected with the Allahabad University. Questioned about the River bungalow, witness said that he had tried and he had found it was impossible to see the sofa from outside. Krishnamurthi had never spoken to him about any offence. He had been in Sicily with the boys. Cross-examined by the Counsel for the plaintiff, witness said that he is a member of the Order of the Star in the East, and Private Secretary to Krishnamurthi, who is the head of the order. He believes in the coming of the World's Teacher, and he thinks it possible that Krishnamurthi may become such a Teacher. Witness is a member of the Esoteric Section.

Mr. Igbal Narain Gurtu, being examined by Mrs. Besant, said that he is a Kashmir Brahmin, and a man of independent means. He is Honorary Secretary of the Central Hindu College at Benares, Honorary Headmaster of the High School, and Secretary of the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society. And he is a member of the Esoteric Section. Mrs. Besant had asked

him to put questions to Lakshman in Hindi, and he had translated Lakshman's statement into Hindi from the English notes made by Mrs. Besant. Lakshman was weeping when the statement was taken and he was unwilling to admit anything. He said that he had spoken to several people and that he had given certain information to Babu Bhagavan Das during the Convention. He said that he went hurriedly into Mr. Leadbeter's room, and there he saw Leadbeter with a shirt on, without trousers. Krishnamurthi was standing naked in front of Leadbeter, and Leadbeter's knee was on a chair, and Leadbeter was dressing Krishnamurthi. He at once came back. He said these things in the course of conversation. Witness noted down what he said in Hindi. Witness wrote down the translation from Mrs. Besant's notes, and read it over to Lakshman and he said it was correct. He affixed his signature to the statement and witness also signed the statement. There was no thumb mark affixed to the statement.

Under cross-examination by the Counsel for the plaintiff, witness that said Lakshman had said nothing to him about the matter before Mrs. Besant made an enquiry. Lakshman was sent for by Mrs. Besant, and, in the presence of witness, Mrs. Besant made notes in English, while he himself made notes in Hindi. Both Mrs. Besant and witness took notes simultaneously; and after the whole conversation was over, witness translated Mrs. Besant's notes to Lakshman, and he said they were a correct statement. The examination lasted only for 15 or 20 minutes.

Counsel said :—

"You see the statement in Hindi. You see that in the statement in Hindi no mention is made of their being naked. How do you account for it ?"

Witness said :—

"I do not know. I translated to Mrs. Besant that Lakshman saw them naked. I do not know why she did not take it down in her notes. My responsibility was only in the translation of Mrs. Besant's notes." Witness denied that Mrs. Besant had lost her temper during the conversation, or had thrown down her pen and spat at it. Lakshman had told witness what he had actually seen and witness believed his statement.

Mr. Ernest Wood, being examined by Mrs. Besant, said that he became a resident at Adyar in December 1908, and private secretary to Mr. Leadbeter in July 1909, and he continued to act as Mr. Leadbeter's private secretary until January 1911. During that time he was always with Mr. Leadbeter, unless he was taking his meals. The wooden doors of Mr. Leadbeter's room were shut only on one occasion, and then witness closed them himself. On April 19, 1910, he had not guarded the boys with sticks, and to his knowledge none else had done so. In answer to questions put by the Counsel for the plaintiff, witness said that he is a private secretary, a travelling lecturer, and sometimes a school master. He was always with Mr. Leadbeter during the early morning hours while he acted as that gentleman's private secretary, going to the River bungalow at 6-30 A.M., sometimes earlier,

sometimes later. Witness believes that the body of Krishnamurthi is going to be used as "a vehicle of Lord Maitreya". He is a follower of Mr. Leadbeter and a member of the Esoteric Section.

Mr. Wadia deposed, under examination by Mrs. Besant, that he is manager of the Theosophical Publishing House and Sub-editor, and that during the whole of 1909-10, he took proofs to Mr. Leadbeter's room in the River bungalow from 5 A.M. to 5. 30., A.M. He had been intimately acquainted with the plaintiff, who had consulted him about the letter of guardianship drafted by Sir Subramania Iyer. Plaintiff had asked witness to put before Mrs. Besant certain points. The first point was that he had no confidence in Mr. Leadbeter, because of his teaching the boys to be disrespectful to their father, the second that Mr. Leadbeter tried to separate the boys from him, the third that he had not made up his mind about Mr. Leadbeter on account of past troubles, and the fourth that he had heard from Subbiah Chetty the story told by Lakshman. Witness promised that he would on the return of Mrs. Besant speak to her about these points. The plaintiff did not at that time say anything against Mr. Leadbeter, but he said that the boys ought not to have been taken by Mr. Leadbeter to the Seven Pagodas without his permission.

Continuing his evidence the following day, witness said that in the beginning of April 1910, the plaintiff was angry because, Mr. Leadbeter took the boys to the Seven Pagodas without asking his permission. That was about the first week of April. Then, one evening,

the plaintiff came to witness in a very excited way and complained that Mr. Leadbeter would not allow the boys to come to his kitchen. The following day Mr. Leadbeter sent for witness and said that the boys were afraid to go to the dining-room, and asked witness to go there with them. Plaintiff then told witness that he would take the boys away from Adyar, and witness persuaded him not to do so. Plaintiff was not at-all an even-tempered man. He got excited on small points, especially when his own self-respect or self-esteem was concerned. In 1910 he did not complain of any indecency. In January 1912 plaintiff showed witness a letter he was sending to Mrs. Besant, and in this letter he made a very serious complaint, different from the complaint witness heard later on. He said that what he complained of had taken place before he signed the letter of guardianship. Witness could not remember the date now. Witness said that he had told Mrs. Besant and she had promised to separate the boys from Mr. Leadbeter.

Cross-examined by the Counsel for the plaintiff, witness said that he is a member of the Esoteric Section and of the Order of the Star in the East. He is a personal friend of Mr. Leadbeter, and he had advocated the re-admission of Mr. Leadbeter into the Society. He had not been a particular friend of the plaintiff, but the plaintiff had come to him about the letter of guardianship because he was nervous in the presence of Mrs. Besant, and had begged witness to speak for him to Mrs. Besant. Plaintiff had heard rumours about the enquiry held in

1906 regarding Mr. Leadbeter, and he had heard from Subbiah the story told by Lakshman. Witness was absolutely certain that one of the reasons why the plaintiff came to him about the letter of guardianship was Lakshman's story. Witness had spoken to Lakshman in November 1909, or December 1909, he was not sure of that date but he was sure that the plaintiff had told him about Lakshman's story in February 1910. Lakshman is a fairly honest man, but very excitable. When witness spoke to Lakshman, the man refused to give particulars and referred him to Schwartz. He spoke to Schwatz, and Schwartz said that something sexual was alleged to have happened. He had common-sense, and he understood what Lakshman meant, although Lakshman had not said that the bad thing witnessed was in relation with Mr. Leadbeter and the boy. Witness spoke vaguely to Mrs. Besant about this matter when he represented to her the difficulties of the plaintiff with regard to the letter of guardianship. Witness denied that the plaintiff had written him a letter about 19-4-10, and said that Mr. Leadbeter's letter to Mrs. Besant mentioning this letter was not accurate. But he said that the plaintiff had blamed him for having brought about the contract between himself and Mrs. Besant, whereby Mrs. Besant had been made the guardian of his boys. Witness did not know the reason for the quarrel on April 18,1910, and he did not think that at that time the plaintiff was extraordinarily excited. Often the plaintiff had threatened to go away from Adyar with his sons, but, on the arrival of Mrs. Besant, he had

calmed down and had told witness that he had apologised to Mrs. Besant. Plaintiff was not prevented from going away, and witness knew nothing about a guard having been placed to prevent the removal of the boys.

Sir Subramania Iyer, being examined by Mrs. Besant, said that he is a retired Judge of the High Court. He joined the Thesophical Society in 1882, and he has been Vice-President, and Recording Secretary, and he is still a member of the General Council. One Sunday morning, early in 1910, after the usual Sunday meeting, Mrs. Besant asked him to draft for her a document by which the plaintiff was to hand over his boys to her and to make her guardian of both the boys and she said that the plaintiff had consented to hand over the boys to her. He prepared the draft and handed it to the defendant. A few days later the plaintiff came to him with the draft and read it aloud to him, and asked whether he would have the right of a father, if he executed the draft. Witness told plaintiff that if he excuted the draft, and handed over the boys, and if the defendant had carried out her right, plaintiff would have waived his right and he could not revoke at-all. Witness meant that the defendant would in that case have absolute right as guardian over the children. He thinks, he also added that if a question should arise in a Court of Law, the Court would be guided as to what would be in the interests of the children. He asked plaintiff if he was prepared to face the difficulties that would arise on the score of caste, if the boys were taken to England for

education. He understood that plaintiff was quite prepared to face that difficulty. He thought a great inducement was that the boys were to get an English University Education, which plaintiff himself could not give them. Witness was almost sure that difficulties would arise, and that it would not be possible in this Presidency to get easily back into caste, and he was neutral, rather pressing the difficulties than otherwise. Witness went on to say that he is "as orthodox as is consistent with his views." He is very familier with the views of orthodox people and he feels for such people and tries to help them, but without much success. Passing on to April 19, 1910, witness said that, hearing there was some trouble at head-quarters, (the defendant being away, it was his duty as Vice-President to see that things there went on smoothly) he went to Adyar and he saw Mr. Leadbeter and the boys. Afterwards he saw the plaintiff, who told him that the previous night the boys had gone without their meal and that he had not been able to gain admittance into the room in which they were at that time living.

His Lordship asked:—

"What did you understand by that?"

Witness replied that he understood that the plaintiff was prevented from taking the boys for their meal. Witness was not sure that the plaintiff had said that he had been prevented from entering the room, but he was sure plaintiff had said that he had not been allowed to take the boys for their meal. Plaintiff made no other complaint, and he suggested that they should send a

joint telegram to Mrs. Besant, telling her that all was quiet.

Passing on to January 19, 1912, witness said:—"I think on that day the defendant arrived from Benares. She sent a message to me, and asked me to be present at the Head Quarters. I went there to her room. The plaintiff was sent for and three other gentlemen were also present. To the best of my recollection I think she asked me what he (the plaintiff) wanted. I think his answer was *nothing*. Then she put a question—"May I take the boys to England?" I think he said *nothing*, and then the defendant asked him if he had any objection to the boys going to England. The plaintiff said he had *none*. To the best of my recollection, the defendant, asked him "what about Mr. Leadbeter?" He told her:—"You must separate them absolutely from him. She declined to do this but said that she would separate them for the time and that she would not undertake to say that the boys would not meet him again. And then, I think, he said that he had no objection to their meeting Mr. Leadbeter if the defendant were there. I think the defendant made a note of it and read it out to those present. I put my signature to it. The plaintiff said that he had no objection to the boys meeting Mr. Leadbeter in the presence of Mrs. Besant.

His Lordship asked:—

"Did Mrs. Besant say anything to the plaintiff when he said that he had no objection to the boys meeting Mr. Leadbeter in her presence?"

Witness replied :—

" I cannot say. I dont remember..'

Mrs. Besant asked :—

" Did the plaintiff in your presence make any complaint as to the immoral conduct of Mr. Leadbeter ?"

Witness replied :—

" Certainly none."

Mrs. Besant asked :—

" And did he say he did communicate to me long before ?"

Witness replied :—

" No."

In reply to the Counsel for the plaintiff, witness said that he is not an "initiate" and he knew nothing personally about the "initiation" of Krishnamurthi. Witness did not know the plaintiff intimately. Plaintiff was very jealous of Leadbeter's influence over his sons. He found plaintiff in a comparatively calm frame of mind when he visited Adyar on the 19th of April, 1910. He thinks he said that plaintiff should make no attempt to remove the boys while Mrs. Besant was away.

In cross-examination concerning the removal of the boys to England, the Counsel for the plaintiff asked :—

Q.—"Was any objection raised by the plaintiff to the boys being taken away to England ?"

A,—" I understood that he had taken some objection sometime previously to the boys being taken to England, I think that impression was in my mind."

Q.—" Are you certain about it ?"

A.—" I cannot say."

Q.—" Was it or was it not an understanding between the plaintiff and the defendant that she should separate the boys from Mr. Leadbeter?"

A.—" I did not understand the separation mentioned. I thought the separation was for the time."

Q.—" Was it or was it not mentioned by the defendant that she had separated the boys from Mr. Leadbeter and so she had met the wishes of the plaintiff?"

A.—" I did not understand it as separation for all time, but only for the time."

Q.—" Can you tell me why that was not meant?"

A.—" I heard the draft read and I signed it. I did not make the draft."

Q.—" What was the object of taking down the statement.?"

A.—" It was, in fact, to have something in writing as to what took place, having regard to Narayaniah's disposition to change."

Q.—" I suppose you considered it impossible that there should be an accurate record of what took place?"

A.—" My mind was not directed to that matter at-all."

Q.—" May I take it that you did not pay much attention to the document, but signed it?"

A.—" Until it was read out, I was not aware that Mrs. Besant made a record of it at-all."

Q.—" Then you did not pay much attention to the document, but only signed it?"

A.—" I heard what was read and signed it."

Q.—" You found there this sentence—" That she separated the boys from Mr. Leadbeter. " Did you understand by that only temporary separation ? "

A.—" I did not take each sentence and think what the effect of that would be. I think it was not intended to be an accurate record of what took place, but I think it was taken down from memory."

Q.—" It was done in an informal way ?"

Witness.—No answer.

Q.—" Can I put it in that way ?"

A.—" I put it that it was not intended to be an accurate record of all that took place, but I think it was for the sake of her memory she put it in writing."

Q.—" You find from what Mrs. Besant had said that the plaintiff had no objection for her taking the boys to England ?"

A.—" It was not one of the things asked for. It was she who asked the plaintiff whether the boys could be taken away to England. In fact, I repeated it. It was she who was anxious to take the boys to England. I did not prepare the document and I cannot vouch for its accuracy. You may take my answer."

Mr. Ramaswami Iyer :—" I don't press you for an answer, if you are not willing."

Sir Subramania Iyer :—" I am quite willing to answer. You can press as much as you like. That is all I can say."

Witness continued :—" I do not remember about any two points he had asked for. I do not know what the

two points referred to in the memorandum are. I can only speak to the conversation. This was fairly the substance. As regards this document, it was read over to me and I signed it."

Q.—"The plaintiff wanted that the boys should be taken to England and not to the place where Mr. Leadbeter was?"

A.—"No."

Q.—"Was there any discussion about it?"

A.—"There was no discusstion about it."

Q.—"At that time was that statement actually signed by the plaintiff.?"

A.—"I think he had left by that time. I am not quite sure about that. The defendant was writing, I think, when the conversation took place. But it was signed after the plaintiff had left the place."

Witness is a member of the Esoteric Section and of the Star in the East, and he has been a friend of Mr. Leadbeter since 1884.

Mrs. Besant here asked His Lordship's permission to ask Sir Subramania Iyer to give to His Lordship his opinion concerning Mr. Leadbeter; but His Lordship declined to give the permission.

His Lordship to Sir Subramania Iyer:—

Q.—"I asked the plaintiff if anyone took charge of the Society during the absence of Mrs. Besant and he told me that no one was in charge and there was a head for each department. Is that true?"

A.—"I was the Vice-President of the Society to be referred to if there was any matter for orders, I held

that position more than once. Things went on so quietly that there was no necessity for me to interfere. In fact, I interfered only once. It was known to all persons at Adyar. The plaintiff also knew it perfectly well."

His Lordship:—"Then the plaintiff came to you about business matter?"

A.—"He came to me once or twice to my house about business matters. He discussed matters connected with the farm and on one occasion he came to me about a land dispute. I think that is all. And he also came to me, I think, about a well dispute, S. V. Subramaniam being the cause of it. They wanted to report him (Subramaniam) to the President. I did settle the matter and gave orders, I think rightly, about the use of the well."

Q.—"Do you remember when that was?"

A.—"That was during the year 1909, a few months after Mr. Leadbeter's arrival."

His Lordship:—"The reason why I asked you this question is, I wished to know whether there was some person in charge at Adyar to whom any question that might arise in case of difficulty would naturally be referred?"

A.—"I was at the head and I was always ready to exercise it as gently as I could."

The Counsel for the plaintiff explained that Sir S. Subramania Iyer was not at the head of affairs at the head-quarters during the absence of Mrs. Besant, in virtue of his being the Vice-President but he was only consulted at times as he was a longstanding respectful

member. Many important communications have been sent to the defendant by others without consulting him.

Mr. A. K. Sitarama Sastri, being examined by Mrs. Besant, deposed that he is the Superintendent of the printing department. He introduced the boys to Mr. Leadbeter and advised their father, with whom he was very friendly, to let Mr. Leadbeter teach the boys after they left school. Plaintiff went with the boys to Mr. Leadbeter's room, and said afterwards that Mr. Leadbeter had a fine knack of teaching boys. (Witness here entered into details of what the plaintiff alleges that he saw in Mr. Leadbeter's room, which cannot be published). Plaintiff told witness about this matter at the close of 1909 and said that he would play the devil with the old man when Mrs. Besant came back from Europe. Witness had advised plaintiff to sign the draft, making Mrs. Besant the guardian of his sons, but had told him to make it clear first about the incident that he alleged to have witnessed in Mr. Leadbeter's room. When plaintiff wanted to leave Adyar with the boys in April 1910, witness advised him not to go away. Plaintiff understood about the "initiation" of his son. He was not disturbed because his boys could not marry. Krishna might not marry. So, also, Nitya. Plaintiff told witness about Lakshman's story in January 1912. He had never spoken of it to witness before. Cross-examined by the Counsel for the plaintiff, witness said that he had heard first about the "initiation" from the plaintiff. Witness told plaintiff that Nitya had been initiated in July 1912, and he then said " I do not believe

in " initiation " and so on. In January 1910 he believed in " initiation ". He used coarse language about Mrs. Besant in 1912 and witness did not want to talk to him.

Mr. Rungareddi, examined by Mrs. Besant, said that he is Superintendent of buildings at Adyar. On the 19th of January, 1912, witness had been sent by Mrs. Besant to fetch the plaintiff, and plaintiff had said that he would not go to see Mrs. Besant. Mr. Sitarama Sastry had then fetched him to the meeting. Witness then said to Mrs. Besant much the same things as had already been said by Sir Subramania Iyer.

Cross-examined by the Counsel for the plaintiff, witness said that Mrs. Besant had asked the plaintiff on the 19th of April, 1912, if he had complained to her of Mr. Leadbeter's conduct with regard to the boys, and the plaintiff had replied " Not definitely," and he had said that he had not complained definitely because she is a lady. Counsel asked " Did Mrs. Besant at that time ask " " Cannot Mr. Leadbeter see Krishna at all ?" and did plaintiff answer " Not unless the boys are in your presence," and witness replied " That took place." Lakshman had complained to Subbiah Chetty and himself and had used the word " *karab*," and they had understood that he had seen something bad in Mr. Leadbeter's room. That was in November or December 1909. Witness belongs to the Esoteric Section.

Mr. Subbiah Chetty said, being examined by Mrs. Besant, that he is a resident at the Theosophical head-quarters at Adyar. All persons had to wait for the

boys to leave the Shrine room before going there for meditation. Such were Mrs. Besant's orders. The boys left the Shrine room at 6 A.M.

Cross-examined by the Vakil for the plaintiff, witness said that he could not remember whether at the meeting on the 19th of January 1912, Mrs. Besant had asked plaintiff whether Krishna could see Mr. Leadbeter, but he remembered that Mrs. Besant had said "I cannot promise" when the plaintiff had said that Mr. Leadbeter must not see the boys unless she was there. In the middle of April 1910 the plaintiff complained to him that a day or so before something had happened. Witness asked him what was the matter, and he said that he had seen something nasty.

Counsel asked:—

Q.—"In April did he (the plaintiff) want to take the boys away?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"In the course of the conversation he mentionod this?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"He said he had seen something nasty?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"Did he give any proof?"

A.—"No."

Q.—"Did you ask him for any proof?"

A.—"I told him that Lakshman had told me a similar story, and he then said, he heard it for the first time."

Q.—" I take it that you understood that the plaintiff had seen something *untoward* between Mr. Leadbeter and the boy ?"

A.—" I cannot say *untoward.*"

Q.—" Did the plaintiff make it clear that he had seen something between the boy and Mr. Leadbeter ?"

A—" He said it was something *avalakshanam*, *i.e.*, nasty."

Continuing, witness said :—

I was present at the December 1910 Convention. I cannot say whether I met Lakshman at that time. I cannot say if I had met him between December 1910 and February 1911. I do not remember if I spoke to the plaintiff about this matter in June 1911. In December 1911, I remember I went to Bagavandas at 9 P.M., and stayed with him till 1 o' clock or thereabouts in the morning. Plaintiff and I were living together at Benares during the Convention. I spoke to the Plaintiff early in the morning about what had happened at Bagavandas' house. It was early morning on the 30th of December 1911, when I told the plaintiff what I have heard in Bagavandas' house the previous night. I did not know the Hindustani language well but I understood from my little knowledge what Lakshman had said. Lakshman had stated what I told you just now. I told the whole of that to the plaintiff. Plaintiff did not tell me anything about it then, except he told me that he heard it for the first time and that he wanted to speak to the President. On the 29th, plaintiff brought a letter from the defendant. He showed me the letter that evening at three or four o'clock on the 29th. It was just

before I went to Bagavandas' house. It was on the 30th that he wanted to see the President about his affair. I left Benares on the 30th and the plaintiff left the next day. When he came here he told me what had happened. He told me that he wanted the boys to be separated from Mr. Leadbeter and therefore I sent a telegram (no trouble if boys remain Benares for study without Mr. Leadbeter). The plaintiff made it clear that there would be trouble if the boys were not separated from Mr. Leadbeter. I sent the telegram myself. I do not remember whether the telegram was due to the plaintiff's initiative. I did not consult Sir Subramania Iyer about this matter. Plaintiff told me that he had asked the President to separate the boys from Mr. Leadbeter and that Mrs. Besant had refused, or some such thing. The telegram was prior to the statement of the 19th January.

Counsel then asked with regard to the statement taken on January 19, 1912.

Q.—"I want to know from you what the two points were that the plaintiff had asked for ?"

A.—"The first was separation from Mr. Leadbeter and the second point was, I think, about taking the boys to England. I don't remember the details of the conversation. What is stated in the statement must be correct. It was clear that the boys should be separated from Mr. Leadbeter. I know that Mrs. Besant said that she would not promise to separate the boys in future. I know Mr. Leadbeter had gone to Italy. Mrs. Besant said she could not promise future separation, probably that was the last question at that interview."

CHAPTER XVI.

Mr. Leadbeter in the Witness-box.

Mr. Charles Leadbeter, who went into the witness-box on the 4th of April, said, in reply to Mrs. Besant, that he was sixty-six years old, and he had entered the Theosophical Society, in London, in 1883, and previous to that time he had been a clergyman of the Church of England. He went to Adyar for the first time in 1884, and left in 1889, and he went to Adyar again in 1905, and he became a resident there in February 1909. The octagon room in the River bungalow was then assigned to him, and that room was given to him as a matter of sentiment, because he had always had it before.

Mrs. Besant showed witness a plan of the bungalow, and he said it was correct. Asked if he lived much alone, witness said that he had no chance of doing so, as he did a great deal of writing work. People were in and out all day, the wooden doors were always open, as the room had no windows. He closed the wire doors at night, but people could see into the room from all sides. His servant did not wear shoes, and moved about quite freely in the early hours.

Continuing his evidence on the 8th of April, Mr. Leadbeter said that after the minors left school, he used to teach them, and that in a letter he expressed a wish to Mrs. Besant that they should be taken away from their father, as they were in a pitiable state. He wanted to do this on account of the hours at which they took food and because he strongly objected to their repeating

things that they did not understand. Witness said that from October 1909 till June 1910, Mrs. Russak and Mrs. van Hook, whom he had known well in Germany, went to him every day at 5-30 A.M., and stayed with him until 6-30 A.M., and that the boys went to him at 6 A.M., and remained there until they went out cycling.

The boys bathed in his bath room for a time, and he introduced certain changes in their bath, and also carbolic soap, so as to make them really clean. On such occasions he had always some covering, such as a shirt or a towel. At the end of January 1910, the boys went at 6 A.M. to the Shrine room for meditation, and afterwards they came to his room for their bycicles, which were kept there. They then changed their silk cloths, had some milk, and went out cycling. That would be between 6-10 A.M. and 7 A.M. While Mrs. Besant was away, they slept in her room, and on her return she moved them to another room. The boys went for their meals to the Indian dining-room. On April 18, 1910, there was some trouble about a very small matter. On that evening the plaintiff followed the boys to Mrs. Besant's room, where they were living at that time, and said that they had not finished their meal. The boys said they could not eat any more. There used to be a regular meeting at 7-15 P.M., which the boys attended, and witness said it would be better not to interfere with the usual routine. There was plenty of demur, but witness had asked the plaintiff to come to meditation, and he had done so without further objection. Witness sent the next day for Sir Subramania Iyer, as he was Vice-Pre-

sident of the Society, and Sir Subramania offered to take the boys home with him and keep them there, and witness sent a wire to Mrs. Besant. Sir Subramania went to see the plaintiff and asked him to wait for Mrs. Besant's return. What was stated in paragraph 5 of the plaint was atrocious falsehood. He had always treated Krishnamurthi with the greatest respect and veneration. Plaintiff never went to witness's room and rebuked him, and never remonstrated with him at any time. After the return of Mrs. Besant, she gave the boys some of their lessons, and they went to the verandah of her room for that purpose. It was understood that the boys were going to England for their education, and on several occasions plaintiff expressed a wish that they should go as soon as possible, so that he might not be annoyed by his relations, and he spoke to witness about his eldest son, whom he wished to send, also, to England.

In reply to a question from His Lordship, Mr. Leadbeter said that Mrs. Besant had spoken to him for the only time at Benares in December 1911, or January 1912, about the plaintiff's complaint. He was exceedingly angry when she told him. He had never heard before about the matter.

Cross-examined by the Counsel for the plaintiff, Mr. Leadbeter said that he had been a Curate of the Church of England, and he had become a Buddhist. He had conducted with Mrs. Besant certain experiments in clairvoyance. He had seen Mars, Mercury and other planets through clairvoyance. It was true that he had stated that he had been privileged to see the Logos and that

he and Mrs, Besant once stood before the Lord of Evolution. He acknowledged having received a letter from Mr. Fullerton in 1906, while he was at Benares, and he said that he had taken the letter to Mrs. Besant and had discussed it with her. It was a fact that the work of discovering hopeful members for Theosophical work had been put into his hands. He had been a clergyman and a Sunday School Superintendent, and he had had a good deal to do at one time or another with the training of young boys. He was able to see thought-forms, and he had given certain advice to a few boys (here details were given concerning this advice that cannot be published). Some doctors condemned such advice and others were in favour of it. Witness had said that physical growth is frequently promoted by setting in motion all these currents. He had treated the matter as an absolutely physiological problem. His opinions had not changed on this subject, but, out of deference to the wishes of Mrs. Besant, he had not repeated the advice since 1906. Mr. Leadbeter then spoke of a certain operation that was to have been performed by Jews, and said that he had contrived to dispense with it by "indicative action." Witness here wrote on paper certain particulars and handed the paper to the Counsel for the plaintiff. Witness said he was not a doctor, but he had come to certain conclusions by common sense. He had given such advice to boys and to young men. He had copied this advice from an organization of the Church of England. Witness denied that he had ever written letters in cypher, but said that he had

talked in cypher. He had the power, he stated, to see horrible thought-forms which frequently close round children, and in the selection of boys for Theosophical work he had been obliged to take up this problem.

Passing on, witness said that, in his opinion, matrimony is good when there is really strong and mutual affection, but matrimony without love, and prostitution, are both worse than the remedy he suggested. All sexual intercourse is forbidden in practical occultism, and he had practised practical occultism.

Plaintiff absolutely denied that he had handled or touched the sons of the plaintiff in an indecent manner. The question might be put to him fifty times and he would say it was the most infamous lie that he had ever heard. He repeated that he had never heard of the complaints made by the plaintiff and Lakshman before Mrs. Besant spoke to him in December 1911, or January 1912. He said that Lakshman might have seen him washing the elder minor's head, in his bath room, but he could fix no date for it.

The Counsel for the plaintiff then showed witness a letter, written by him to Mrs. Besant, dated 18th April, 1910, in which he said "Two days ago, the father had a bad fit of insanity. Of course he did not say anything to me (he never does) but he was rude to the boys etc." and asked :—

Q.—" Do you know to what the fit of insanity referred ? "

A.—" I do not know ".

Q.—" Did it refer to the food trouble ?"

A.—" No."

Q.—" Did it refer to any milk trouble ?"

A.—" No".

Q.—" Did it refer to the Mahabalpuram trip ?"

A.—" No."

Q.—" Then to what does it refer ?"

A.—" I do not know. I cannot say".

Re-examined by Mrs. Besant, witness said that he had given certain advice with the object of avoiding the danger of entanglement with women and bad boys.

Q.—" In the case referred to, the boys' mother brought the boys to you before the surgical operation. I want to know whether she was present or not during the time ?"

A.—" She was present, of course."

His Lordship.—

" Did you advise the mother in any way ? "

Witness.—" Yes."

His Lerdship.—

" What advice did you give her ? "

Witness.—

" I think I said it was necessary to continue that advice."

Witness continued :—

" I have written letters to the defendant, to explain my position, who has been misled by false reports. They were absolutely private, and I had not the faintest idea that they would have ever been brought out in this way."

This closed the examination of the witnesses for the defence, and Mrs. Besant afterwards began to address His Lordship.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mrs. Besant's Address.

On the 8th of April Mrs. Besant commenced her address.

She began by stating that she did not propose to argue the questions of law regarding the jurisdiction of the Court to try the case, and that she wished to rely entirely on the evidence that had been so thoroughly gone into.

She then proceeded to argue whether the plaintiff was entitled to revoke the authority given by him to her to have the custody and guardianship of the boys. The authority given by the plaintiff was the letter dated March 6, 1910, and this was drawn up by Sir S. Subramania Iyer, who had been described by the Privy Council as "one of the ablest Judges and soundest lawyers in India". She did not go to Court without legal advice, and Sir Subramania Iyer had stated in cross-examination that in such cases the Court cared only for the welfare of the minors. She took the father's consent to the removal of the boys from India, and the father had no objection to her taking them to England.

The first objection raised by the leaned Counsel for the plaintiff was that the contract as to guardianship

was void because it was against public policy. Her reply to this was that public policy was a vague term and changed with civilization. The way in which the Courts had regarded public policy during the past fifty years varied very much. She proceeded to quote from Simpson on the law relating to infants, and drew attention to the manner in which public policy had changed. The whole tendency of modern civilization, she said, was to consider the welfare of the child as the only serious matter, and to put aside all questions of feeling, where the custody of a minor was concerned. The plaintiff's Counsel had quoted the views expressed in certain decisions as regards the breaking up of the foundations of family life, but she could bring forward a Chancery Division case in which a different view had been put forward. She admitted that the right of the father under Common Law was complete, but Common Law had been very much limited in practice by royal prerogatives, which made children royal wards, and even under Common Law custody could be interfered with. Among the cases quoted by the Counsel for the plaintiff she had found some very old ones. Others which were not very old concerned very young children. The principle of *habeas corpus*, which was relied on by the Counsel for the plaintiff, applied to children under fourteen years of age. She admitted the control of a father over his child up to the age of nurture, namely the age of fourteen. The other cases quoted by the Counsel for the plaintiff were more or less irrelevant. In this case the Court would

have to be guided by the rules of equity and the right of Common Law, and questions would no doubt arise as to what justified interference with the natural right of the father to the custody of his child. Certain principles were laid down by Simpson, and the first of those principles was the unfitness of the father by reason of his character. Mrs. Besant did not contend that because a father was poor, therefore he should be deprived of the custody of his children; and she admitted that a father who was poor had the same right over his children as a father who was rich, and she did not contend that the plaintiff's character was bad. She urged that the sole consideration was what would be best for the sons of the plaintiff. She went on to deal with the law relating to waiver, and to read extracts from various decisions, and she continued this line of argument until the Court rose for the day.

The following morning (April 9), at 11 A.M., Mrs. Besant, in resuming her address, said that the Common Law in England was that the age of consent of males was 14 and of females 16, and that they might choose their guardians after that age, and that if an infant was of age to choose his guardians, the Court would take his wishes into consideration. The Court might make an order with regard to the custody of the infants, recognising the right of either parent. Having regard to the welfare of the infant, the wishes of the mother as well as the father should be consulted.

Mrs. Besant went on to say that, in the present case, the elder ward would be eighteen in five weeks

from the present time, and would be of age. His domicile was clearly the father's domicile, and his living in England would not give him an English domicile, in which case his majority would come at his 21st year. The learned Counsel for the plaintiff had said that the bringing of the suit had raised the age of majority from 18 to 21, and there was one sentence in Daniel that seemed to suggest that. On the other hand there was quite a distinct statement that the order must be granted before the age rose from 18 to 21. On page 77 of Trevelyan on minors, a case was quoted in which it was clearly stated that an application for an order, which, if successful, would in effect prolong the minority of a minor from 18 to 21, should not be granted when the alleged minor was on the point of attaining the age of 18. Krishnamurthi was within five weeks of the age of 18. Unless under particular circumstances, such as weakness of intelligence or necessity for the preservation of property, such an order should not be passed.

Mrs. Besant went on to quote various decisions, and among these one of an Indian wife who was kept away from her husband by her own father. The husband applied for the custody of his wife, and in order to gain it, he made himself her guardian. Although the girl was under 16, her wish was consulted, and the Court refused to constitute her husband her guardian, and gave to the girl the option to return to her husband at any time that she might desire to do so. Five weeks hence, the elder minor, Krishnamurthi, would be free, and would be entirely free from her authority, and there would be

nothing to prevent his father from taking him, if he (Krishnamurthi) so desired. He could then come straight back to live with his father, and the younger minor would then inevitably come with him, because the brothers were tenderly attached to each other. That constituted the fundamental absurdity of the suit. Before the Court could act, the elder minor would be free. Even the passing of an order would be comparatively useless, because the elder minor would be free to do as he pleased in a very short period of time. Mrs. Besant quoted a case in which the Judge had refused to make an order concerning the guardianship of a girl, although she was two years under age, holding that although she was still a minor, she was within a short distance of attaining her majority. If two years was a short period, five weeks was much more so, and this Court could hardly be justified in making an order that would be valid for a very, very short time.

Mrs. Besant did not contend that the Court should not declare the contract to be binding between the parents and the guardian, if really good cause was shewn for declaring that contract to be void. If there was any serious wrong-doing, either done or sanctioned, it would naturally and quite rightly bring the case under the same rule as guided Mr. Justice Wallis in the Pollard Case, I. L. R. 33, Madras P. 288, which had been quoted by the learned Counsel for the plaintiff. She proceeded to quote the case of a girl, named Joshi Ram, which she said was a standard one, and also a case in which the wishes of the children were consulted, and in

which the Court decided that a boy should not go back to his guardian because he cried bitterly when told that he must do so.

" Hindu law does not recognise any absolute right of guardianship in any one except the Sovereign," said Mrs. Besant, "and the Sovereign can appoint anyone as the guardian of anyone."

Mrs. Besant then referred to various sections of the Guardian and Wards Act, and pointed out that the Act stated that the Court must consider the well-being of the minor, and in appointing a guardian of his person must look to his moral, bodily and intellectual welfare.

She went on to say that His Lordship had excluded from the suit the question of the authorship of the book "*At the Feet of the Master*"; and that if Krishnamurthi did not wish the book to appear in his name, he could repudiate it.

The Counsel for the plaintiff had expressed himself very strongly on the point of the question of religious life, and therefore she would draw the attention of His Lordship to it under the head of intellectual and moral welfare, but she did not propose to go into the question of the " initiation ".

The learned Council had said that the only object of the plaintiff in assigning the boys to her care was that they should have an University education in England.

So far as their intellectual welfare was concerned, this was one of the main objects of consigning the boys to her care, and if the boys were left with her, then the

father's wishes would be carried out and the object of the letter of guardianship of March 6, 1910, would be carried out in full. But if the plaintiff succeeded in the suit, he destroyed the very object for which the suit was instituted, and the difficulties regarding the education of the boys would be greatly increased. The details of the examinations of the Madras University, to which the boys were presumed to go, if they came back, were very different from those of the Oxford University, for which the boys had been prepared during the last year and a half. There would be a delay of some years in completing the education of the boys if they had to take up now a different curriculum.

His Lordship here observed that it is a matter of common knowledge that one University differs from another.

Mrs. Besant went on to say that there are considerable difficulties to be overcome in the admission of Indian boys to either Oxford or Cambridge University, but in spite of these difficulties the boys had been admitted. If the boys were now moved from England to Madras, the object for which the plaintiff had signed the letter of guardianship would be frustrated, and they would be deprived of the English University training that the plaintiff had said was his only object in making her (Mrs. Besant) guardian of the boys. All her trouble and expenditure would in that case be wasted.

Mrs. Besant then said that there could be no question that the boys were legally removed by her to England. Five witnesses had been examined, and

herself as well, and all spoke to the effect that she gave no promise to keep the boys entirely away from Mr. Leadbeter, when the plaintiff gave his consent to the removal of the boys. There was no proposal that Mr. Leadbeter should go to England. One of the boys was close to his majority and would in a few weeks be free. The University question was not so important for the elder as the younger boy, the latter being practically a genius, who would certainly reach the highest University honours. If the younger boy were to be removed from England, whatever education might be provided for him in Big Street, Triplicane, she would say that it would be a cruelty to remove him to Madras after he had been trained on entirely different lines. Mrs. Besant asserted, with regard to the moral and social welfare of the boys, that they had lost caste, although the plaintiff had spoken to the contrary in the witness-box, and had said that some of his relations had gone to England and had been afterwards received back into caste. Sir Subramania Aiyar had spoken of the extreme difficulty of bringing back into caste Brahmins who had visited England, and such difficulties were even greater in the Madras Presidency than in other parts of India.

Another and far greater difficulty was with regard to the moral welfare of the boys. The character of the elder boy would be irretrievably ruined if, by order of the Court, he was brought to Madras. Giving him back to his father meant to endorse his father's accusations against him, not to speak of the misery the boy must endure if placed in the power of a father who had made

such terrible accusations against him. If Krishnamurthi was restored to the custody of his father, he would be an outcast among Indians and Englishmen, and there was even the possibility of his arrest for having committed a penal offence at the age of fifteen. She asked His Lordship to put these two facts together in deciding the question of the welfare of the minors. In England they were surrounded by people who treated them with care and love, refined and cultured people, people eminent in intellectual, moral and social life. If the boys were brought back by order of the Court, it would mean that all the slanders were true, and the lads would be placed in a terrible position.

With regard to the remarks of Counsel as to the religious life of Krishnamurthi, there was a slight misunderstanding. The boy was compared to a Hindu Sanyasi. Certain rules of life and distinctive outward symbols shut out the Hindu Sanyasi from a large number of possible occupations. In the first place, he wore a special dress, he should live by begging, and he should not remain more than three nights under the same roof. His studies were confined to the Sanskrit language—the *Devabasha*. He was cut off from the civil and social life of the country. This was an altogether misleading idea as regards Krishnamurthi. She did not believe that Krishnamurthi would marry. But there was no outer compulsion placed upon him by Theosophists. The *initiate* might marry after the ceremony was over. Krishnamurthi refused to marry, and the plaintiff approved of that. From the Theosophical

standpoint the boy was suited to the religious life, and that would mean, after the ceremony that he had undergone, that he would be shut out from party politics. But he would not be shut out from any of the learned professions. Mrs. Besant hoped that the younger boy would enter the Indian Civil Service, for the sake of the support of his brother and the help of his family. (Here the statements of Mrs. Besant regarding the boys were not easy to follow, and it was not clear afterwards to which boy she referred). But whatever profession the boy took up, must be followed for the sake of service and not for the sake of money alone. He might be a lawyer, teacher, or Government servant. He might even do political work, if it were not of a party character. He might devote his life to the protection of children and animals, or to social and educational reforms. He might enjoy all the privileges of a Bishop of Madras, belonging to the Church of England. He might sit in the Viceroy's Legislative Council. He might, in fact, do anything that was useful, provided his one idea was service to God and man. The comparison made by Counsel to the Hindu *Sanyasi* would confuse the Court into the thought that the present training of the boys would hinder them from entering a life of social service. The training that they were undergoing was infinitely better than that given to many boys to fit them for the lower ranks of the Civil Service.

The fourth issue was whether a Hindu father could give any irrevocable consent. The Hindu practice of adoption was an answer to that. Irrevocable consent

could be given. An adopted son, entering a new family, lost all rights of property in the old family, and could not take them up again. Madras cases definitely laid down that the Hindu law recognised no absolute right of guardianship in any one, because the Sovereign was the supreme guardian.

The only other point was with regard to the final prayer of the plaintiff for an order to hand over to him, or to such other person as the Court should appoint, his two sons. Mrs. Besant admitted that the Court had the power to appoint a guardian. It was definitely laid down by Daniel (page 10). The right of the Court to appoint a guardian over person and property was not in any way challenged by her. But the Court could not possibly take over infants who had no funds available for their maintenance, within its jurisdiction.

It was suggested that she had broken the contract by placing the boys under other guardianship than her own. The boys were in England. Mr. Leadbeter was in Adyar. She had never made Mr. Leadbeter their guardian. The boys were now under her agents in England, but her agents were not their guardians. It was suggested that the objection was against putting the boys under Mr. Leadbeter, not on the ground of any immorality on his part but on the ground that he was a Buddhist. As a matter of fact her own position was one that recommended itself very much to some orthodox Hindus. She could not possibly be a Hindu, because a Hindu must be born in the Hindu fold, but, as regardd Hinduism, she was in sympathy with its philosophy and

its spiritual teachings, and in fact with every spiritual teaching of the world. It was stated by the father that the boys should be brought up as Hindus. In the liberal sense, she would bring them up in the religion of their father. There was no essential difference between Theosophy and Hinduism, or Theosophy and other religions.

She would ask the Court not to appoint a guardian for two reasons, first, because the elder minor was very near his majority ; secondly, because the power so granted by the Court to the father may not be recognised in England.

Mrs. Besant proceeded to say that she made no promise to entirely separate the boys from Mr. Leadbeter. She took the boys to England, and they remained with her there while she delivered a large number of lectures. They then went to Sicily, where they met Mr. Leadbeter. She followed and remained there during April, May, June and July. She then returned, but the boys went to Genoa with Mr. Leadbeter and subsequently joined her in England. She knew that some such thing must happen, and so she guarded herself by the statement that the boys could not be altogether separated from Mr. Leadbeter. The plaintiff now asked for an order of Court to deliver up the boys. It was stated that she was the wrong-doer. On the contrary, it was the plaintiff who was the wrong-doer. If an application had been made by the plaintiff to stop her before she left India, the present difficulties would not have arisen. There was plenty of time to get an injunction order

from the Court preventing her from taking the boys to England. The boys were allowed to go to England, and now the plaintiff had brought a suit and it was not for him to complain of the difficulties he had himself created.

Questioned by His Lordship, Mrs. Besant said that the plaintiff had an interview with her on the 19th of January 1912, and he consented then to let the boys go to Europe, and every one of the five witnesses who had been present at the interview had given evidence that he had desired the separation of the boys from Mr. Leadbeter, but that she had refused to make any promise, as to the future, and that he had accepted her refusal.

His Lordship asked:—

"What was the state of the plaintiff's mind when you refused to make a promise which you thought you could not fulfil? What was his position then? Did he say "I wont consent to the boys going to England," or did he say "Very well, you may take them."

Mrs. Besant replied that if the plaintiff had refused to give his consent there would have been no difficulty. She told the plaintiff that Mr. Leadbeter and the boys were going away for three months seclusion. The boys were taken to England with the plaintiff's consent. She took a return ticket for Mr. Leadbeter, but she took no return tickets for the boys.

Mrs. Besant then went on to say that the learned Counsel, by asking the Court to appoint a guardian for the boys, seemed to put the Court at the edge of a precipice. Supposing such an order was passed, how

could it be enforced ? The authority quoted by Counsel referred to minors of 9 and 7, whereas in the present case they were on the verge of majority. The elder boy would be a major long before she could execute the order. Supposing the younger boy said that he his not going to give up his prospects, how was she to enforce the order ? The boys left the country with the consent of the plaintiff. The plaintiff's present action would mean stopping their education, and defeating his own original intention. The plaintiff had no right to the indulgence of the Court, to risk the Court being placed in an impossible position, because difficulties would arise in carrying out the order. Her knowledge of the powers of the Court was limited. The boys were now in the hands of her agents. There was no necessity for His Lordship to pass an order for the elder minor, who could return to India of his own accord in a short time, if he wished to do so. In that case she would certainly provide him with the passage money.

Proceeding to deal with the evidence, Mrs. Besant said that under the guise of a Civil Suit for the custody of minors, the trial was practically a trial of two, if not three, persons on a very serious crime. The first victim was the elder ward, the second, Mr. Leadbeter, and the third, herself.

Turning to the evidence given by the plaintiff, Mrs. Besant said that no father would accuse his son of such a crime unless he knew that that crime had been committed. No father would accuse a son of such a crime for his son's sake. Having brought a suit and given

publicity to a terrible accusation, the plaintiff could not exercise the duty of a father as regards protection. His right as a father to custody entirely lapsed, for where the duty of protection had been renounced, the right to custody disappeared. The charge against Mr. Leadbeter was that he was an immoral person. The only evidence relied upon was Mr. Leadbeter's own letters. If Mr. Leadbeter had been tried on a criminal charge, he would have had the protection of the Court. In a criminal charge no person in this country could be put into the witness-box to give evidence against himself, but in a Civil suit, it appeared, he could be put into the witness-box for that purpose. At her instance, all documents connected with the custody of the minors and everything else connected with the matter had been disclosed, because she wanted to throw full light upon the subject and to hold back nothing. If it had been a criminal suit there would have been no such disclosure. The trouble alleged to have taken place on the 19th of April, 1910, was not mentioned to Sir S. Subramania Iyer by the plaintiff, although he was the Vice-President of the Society and in her absence had full authority. She was supposed to have concealed this abominable crime. Mrs. Besant went on to explain certain changes made in the bathing arrangements, and concluded by saying that no such thing as alleged by the plaintiff had happened.

The Court adjourned for lunch, and after the interval Mrs. Besant continued her address. She submitted that the evidence of the plaintiff was contradictory, and was highly improbable, taking into consid-

eration the evidence given by respectable gentlemen on behalf of the defence. With regard to the date of the alleged offence, different stories were told by the plaintiff, though the place of offence was left unchanged. Sitarama Sastry, who was an old friend of the plaintiff, said in cross-examination that this alleged occurrence was two weeks prior to the date of the arrival of the defendant at Adyar, in January, 1910. It was not a probable story that Nitya would be shivering on the verandah in the month of April in Madras. The plaintiff also stated that he had taken Mr. Leadbeter only to task. With regard to the story told by the plaintiff, she had proved by a number of witnesses that it would have been impossible for anyone to have seen the sofa, or Mr. Leadbeter, who was said to have been lying on the sofa, at that time, from the place wherefrom the plaintiff said he saw the offence. Probably this story was imagined by the plaintiff. The only point the Court would have to consider in this matter was whether Mr. Arundale and Mr. Wood had perjured themselves to contradict the story of the plaintiff. Mrs. Besant contended that no human father, having the welfare of his sons at heart, would have concealed the matter from others, if it was true that the incident had occurred. The plaintiff left the boys after the alleged event to associate with an alleged criminal until 1912. The life of the elder minor had to be blackened on such evidence as was given by the plaintiff.

The story was absolutely unsupported, said Mrs. Besant, and was given by a man who knew that he was

contradicted on all particulars. Why had not the plaintiff objected to the boys being left with Mr. Leadbeter when he went to Madanapalli with herself, Mrs. Besant asked ? Afterwards she drew His Lordship's attention to the fact that the plaintiff's first statement, which contained very serious charges against Krishnamurthi, was printed in one of the Madras papers and circulated all over the world; and she asked the Court to give a decision that might be printed in Madras papers, and she said that she intented to republish the decision broadcast, so that those who had published the original slander might see the justice of the Court in declaring the first statement to be false. She also hoped that the decision of the Court might be published in papers in other countries, and for that reason she asked for a complete decision of the Court. If this horrible thing had been said two or three years ago, she, as guardian of the wards, would have been justified in prosecuting the plaintiff for perjury, but that remedy was lost now, because Krishnamurthi would attain his majority in five weeks time, and no son in India would take any action against his own father.

Mrs. Besant proceeded to analyse the evidence taken for the defence. Mrs. van Hook's evidence made it clear that the plaintiff could not have witnessed the incident mentioned to her by him. Lakshman was not at Adyar on the date mentioned by the plaintiff. The residents at Adyar were very regular in their habits of life, and at the hour mentioned by the plaintiff, about thirty or forty people went every morning to the Shrine

room for meditation, and it would have been quite impossible for Mr. Leadbeter to have been at that time alone in his room. Mrs. van Hook had said that she had not missed a single morning and she was always in Mr. Leadbeter's room between 5-30 A.M., and 6-15 A.M., and that afterwards the boys left for cycling exercise. On this point Mr. Arundale, Mr. Ruspoli and Mr. Leadbeter had all spoken. With regard to Lakshman's story, she would say that it was a true one, and that he was shocked was quite natural, because according to Hindu prejudices and customs it was shocking to see some one bathing without his clothes. Mrs. Besant denied that she had ever had any information as to these wrong proceedings in December 1910. It was her desire that the boys should hear none of these stories, and that was why no one was allowed to go to their room at Benares.

Mr. Leadbeter, continued Mrs. Besant, is an old member of the Theosophical Society and he is regarded as a spiritual teacher by hundreds and thousands of men and women. He gave certain advice only in a solitary case in 1906, and then at the request of the mother of the boy. He promised her that he would not repeat such advice and he has kept his promise until now. The Committee of Enquiry acquitted him of all the charges brought against him. She herself had condemned the practice and she had not withdrawn her condemnation.

Here Mrs. Besant wished to hand to His Lordship a book in which a doctor approved of a certain

action from a surgical point of view, and the Counsel for the plaintiff said that he could produce the opinions of many doctors who took a contrary opinion. His Lordship perused the passage pointed out by Mrs. Besant, saying that the other side could produce opposite opinions if they liked to do so.

Speaking of the letters produced in Court, Mrs. Besant said that if Mr. Leadbeter was to be condemned as an immoral man on the strength of private letters not intended to be made public, and written to herself in order to remove the unjust misapprehensions she had entertained of his teachings, if Mr. Leadbeter was to be condemned as an immoral man on the strength of letters that were not intended as a defence in public, it was a very hard thing.

His Lordship said :—

" The point you have to meet is different. The question is whether the plaintiff is entitled to say : ' I don't choose to see my boys associating with a man of such opinions.' The opinions may be right or wrong from a scientific point of view. But looking at it from the ordinary, general point of view, I think it is a question you have to meet. Looking at it from the ordinary social and moral point of view, is he bound to confide his sons to a man professing those views. ? "

Mrs. Besant said :—

" But the plaintiff knew of these opinions of Mr. Leadbeter in March 1910, and he confided his boys to his care."

His Lordship said:—

"A man may always change his mind if he thinks he honestly believes it. And even if in March 1910, he was well aware of Mr. Leadbeter's views, on further consideration and advice from anxious friends, is he not entitled to change it? Take it that a man consented to his boy being placed in a particular school, and then, later, knowing the master's views or opinions, may he not withdraw the boy from the school? I want to hear you on this point. I think it is a very important point, and will be urged on the other side—whether a man avows his views publicly or not, the possibility that he may teach those views, is it not a circumstance which would justify the father taking action?"

Mrs. Besant said that her answer was that a man so truthful and honest as Mr. Leadbeter, who was prepared to avow his opinion frankly, showed that he would keep the promise not to teach them.

His Lordship said:—

"That is an argument that may be used against you. The father may say that he would not run any risks and that he would prefer his son to be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion, and say, " I am determined to do the best I can do. Mr. Leadbeter may, no doubt, be a perfectly honest man. I shall, however, try to avoid risks.' Is he not entitled to say 'I wish to exclude the possibility of any error of discretion?"

Mrs. Besant in reply said that she quite realised the possibility of such an argument being advanced on the other side. Her answer to His Lordship's observation

was that she never permitted the boys to be associated with a man of immoral character. Mr. Leadbeter, she said, was a man who had been for nearly 29 years a Member of the Theosophical Society and one of its most respected and honored members. He was a man of spotless character, he was industrious, frugal, temperate, pure, and chaste, and he was now 66 years of age. While he was a clergyman, he came across several young girls who had been runied by young men, and he cast about to find a way, so that if men went wrong they would not injure young and helpless women. Mr. Leadbeter had, in deference to her objection to advice that she thought dishonourable and unmanly, promised to refrain from giving such advice, and he had kept his promise up to the present time. Mrs. Besant then read some passages from a pamphlet which was an Exhibit in the case issued from Paris, under the joint names of herself and Mr. Leadbeter, in which they both emphatically condemned the practice of ****—*****

Mrs. Besant said that her boys (the sons of the plaintiff) were the purest jewels, and they would not be injured by hearing any academic opinion held by Mr. Leadbeter. And she asked His Lordship not to hold on that issue a man as immoral, who was regarded by thousands of respectable men and women as a spiritual teacher of pure and spotless character.

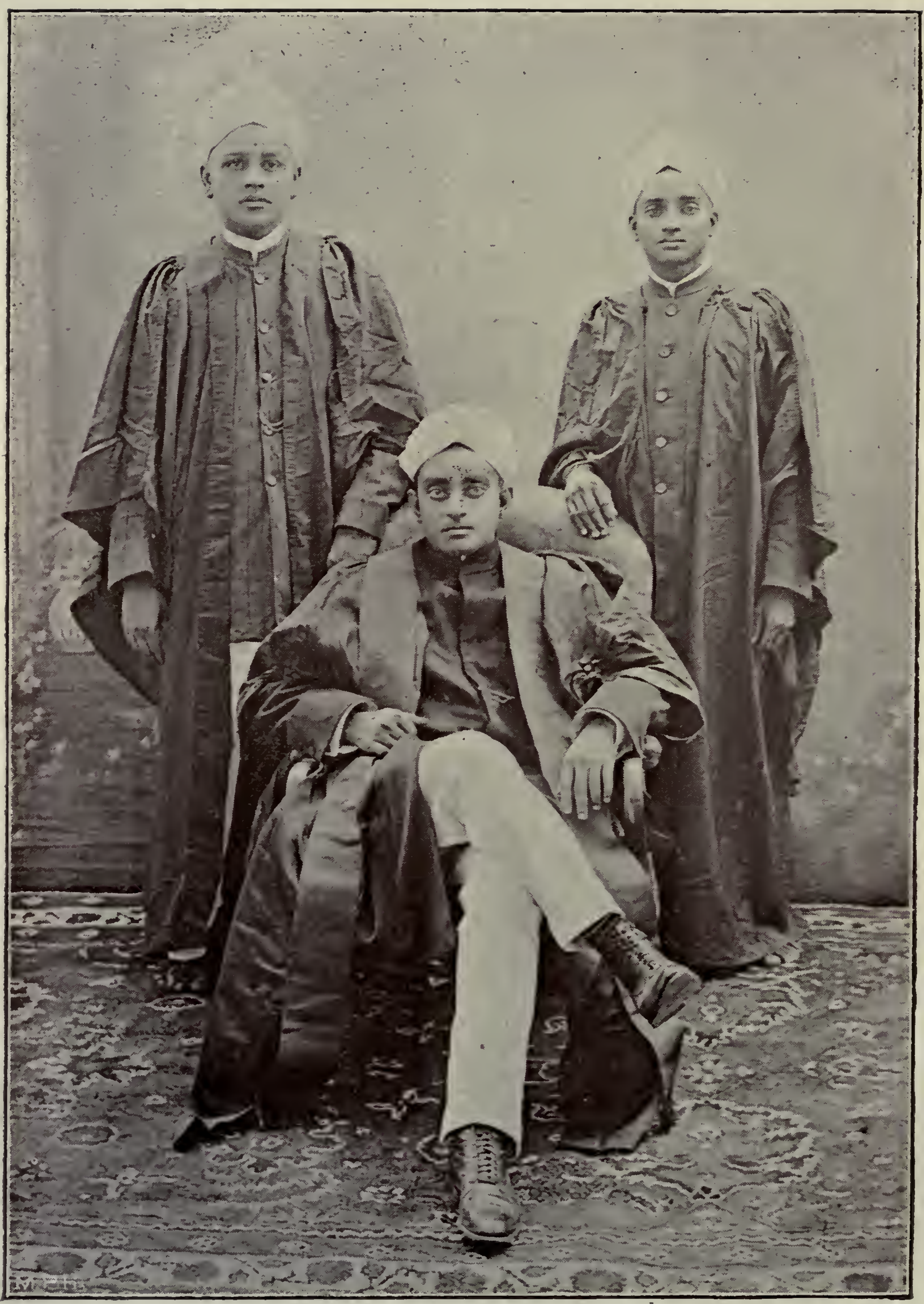
Mrs. Besant submitted that the plaintiff had never talked to her about his accusations against Mr. Leadbeter, and she asked if a father who had seen such

conduct would allow his sons to associate with such a man afterwards? At that time, according to the father's own evidence, he simply took the boys away to his own quarters, and never mentioned the incident to anyone at head-quarters. It was therefore plain that he subsequently invented the story. She asked his Lordship to allow the boys to remain with her in order that she might protect them, the reputation of the elder minor having been blackened by his own parent.

With regard to the elder boy becoming Lord Maitreya, or Lord Christ, Mrs. Besant submitted that there was no evidence that she had ever said so. If she had ever said so, then it ought to be proved. She might have spoken on this subject to some pupils, under great secrecy, and what she said thus could only be understood by one who had taken the pledge.

His Lordship observed that it might be argued by the plaintiff that he desired his son to be brought up as an ordinary boy.

Mrs. Besant said it was now too late for the father to reduce Krishaamurthi to a commonplace boy, and that he was too extraordinary a boy to be treated according to his father's wishes. With the greatest deference she asked His Lordship for nothing more than a decision based on the welfare of the two boys. Finally Mrs. Besant said that if His Lordship granted the suit, Krishnamurthi would be branded as a criminal, a dark stain would be put on Mr. Leadbeter for the rest of his life, and, with regard to herself, she would only say that she was old, and that if she was declared to be unfit to



Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer. (Counsel)

Mr. N. Chandra Sekara Iyer. Mr. M. Subraya Iyer.

have charge of the boys, then she would not be deemed fit to be the spiritual teacher of thousands of men and women.

" My own children were taken away by a Court of Law, " said Mrs. Besant, " and left motherless and with a cloud on their youth, but they came back to me the moment they were free. These boys will come back to me, if in your Lordship's judgment you think right to take them from my charge. I leave the case in your Lordship's hands, the hands of him, who in this High Court represents the justice of God and the King, and in your Lordship's hands I place the character, the good name and the honour of my boys " (the sons of the plaintiff).

CHAPTER XVIII.

Counsel's closing Address.

On the 10th of April, at 11 A.M., the Counsel for the plaintiff (Mr. C. P. Ramasamy Iyer) began to address his Lordship, said ;—

My Lord, an attempt has been made by the defendant to suggest that this suit is the result of some malevolence and spite and is not brought with an honest desire for the benefit of the minors. I shall tell your Lordship that my client is willing and anxious to make an immediate provision, if necessary, for the education and up-bringing of the minors, and your Lordship may take it now as an undertaking on the part of my client that he will deposit Rs. 10,000, under such conditions

as your Lordship may determine for that purpose. It is not an inconsiderable portion of his property, but he is willing to make such a provision rather than leave the minors under the training to which they are subject at present. My client is willing that some person of undoubted respectability should be associated with him in the guardianship of these boys, and also that they should be made wards of this Court and subject to such directions as regards their education as your Lordship may see fit to impose. I have a list of gentlemen who are willing to undertake the guardianship of the minors, and one is a gentleman who has held very high office in the State and who is universally admired and respected. This gentleman is willing to undertake the guardianship solely, or in conjunction with the plaintiff. My client is sincerely anxious in this suit to obtain the custody of his sons, for what he believes to be their welfare and advantage and your Lordship will see that he has not instituted this action out of spite or personal ill-feeling towards any individual. It was suggested that he was actuated by insane jealousy of Mr. Leadbeter and personal hatred towards Mrs. Besant, and he feels that it is necessary to show that it is not so and that he is willing to take such steps as will conduce to the welfare of the minors. Counsel proceeded to say that in this case of delegation the father was at liberty to change his mind at any time, and that the fact that the defendant had expended money on the boys, or had undertaken considerable trouble in their education, did not disentitle him to revoke his delegation.

His Lordship said :—

"In this case he changes his mind at a very late stage. It is three years since the letter of guardianship was given."

Counsel submitted that that was not the fault of the plaintiff. The guardianship letter was given in 1910. In December 1911, the plaintiff indicated his intention fully. In January, 1912, the defendant promised to separate the boys from Mr. Leadbeter, and the plaintiff relied on her promise, and he allowed her to take the boys to England. He would not have consented to their removal to England if the defendant had not promised an absolute separation of the boys from Mr. Leadbeter in a statement taken on the 19th of January, 1912, to which Counsel would refer later. After the letter, dated February 7, 1912, was written by the defendant to the plaintiff from the Indian Ocean, a notice was sent to the defendant, and the delay was caused by the intervention of others, including the Corresponding Secretary of the Theosophical Society, who said "Dont take any rash steps" and advised waiting till the defendant returned to India. It was after July that the plaintiff had the first intimation that his claim to the demand of the boys' custody would be resisted, and afterwards, as soon as the defendant came within jurisdiction, the suit was filed. To the last, the plaintiff hoped that in a personal interview something would be done to set matters right, and he had no reason to believe that his rights would be resisted and that his boys would not be given back to him. Counsel pointed out that the

only alternative for the plaintiff was to go to England, and file a suit there, a course fraught with so many difficulties that his client could not be blamed for not taking it. The plaintiff being unacquainted with England, for him to take any legal course there would have been exceedingly difficult.

Mr. Ramasamy Iyer proceeded to point out that the minors are not now resident in any College, although it had been said that they would enter into residence at Oxford in 1914. As to the elder boy being within five weeks of the age of 18, Counsel would endeavour to show cases in which at the age of 17 the Courts had interfered, and had made minors wards of the Court in order that they might be brought under the direction of the Court. If His Lordship appointed a guardian, the elder boy would attain his majority in three years and five weeks. It was absolutely necessary that the period of minority in the case of the elder boy should be extended to 21. So far as the younger boy was concerned, there was plenty of time to secure his education on lines approved of by this Honourable Court. Counsel proceeded to quote cases as to the right of a father to change his mind, and he criticised the cases brought forward by the defendant on this subject. He referred to Mrs. Besant's statement that the plaintiff had insisted on a provision being made by a will and that she had acted in persuance of that request, and he said that this statement was not supported by evidence, and that wills are by nature ambulatory and cannot be depended upon. Some money had been spent, no doubt,

by the defendant on the minors, but no accounts had been produced, and therefore the statement made by the defendant that Rs. 27,000 had been spent on the boys, did not deserve the consideration of the Court.

Next came the question as to the choice of the boys. The minors were not before His Lordship, they had not been produced in Court, so their wishes could not be taken one way or another, and Counsel asked His Lordship to dismiss this part of the defendant's argument.

As regards the " initiation, " it was stated that the boys were taken up because of it, and that hundreds of applications from children had been refused. The evidence of the defendant showed that she did not speak to the plaintiff about the "initiation." The plaintiff wast not aware of the " initiation " until it had taken place. After all, what was that "initiation ? " The Court could deal only with physical phenomena. What was that voyage to Tibet during which the soul was in one place and the body was in another ?

His Lordship said :—

"The plaintiff was well aware of the ceremony. That was clear from his own evidence."

Counsel said that " initiation " was not the inducement to hand over the children, but that the education of the children was the inducement held out by the defendant. Supposing the father had transferred his son for the purpose of that mystic process, or rite, he could say afterwards that he did not approve of it, and that he did not wish the elder minor to be further deified. At that

time he had a firm belief in the mystic process, and now he had changed his view.

His Lordship remarked:—

"No doubt."

Counsel admitted that the plaintiff had believed for a long time in the efficacy of these things. But supposing he had given up his sons for the purpose of "initiation," he could change his mind, and say that the boys-ought not to be any longer under spiritualistic or occult influence. He was at liberty to bring up his sons as ordinary human beings. Plaintiff had stated that the boys would enter Oxford University in 1914, and that their preparation for an English University ought not to be disturbed. Until the present time the boys had been privately educated, and they might, or might not, be sent to Oxford. There was no certainty that the defendant would allow them to go to Oxford, and she had stated that the degree was useless for her purpose regarding the elder boy. It was not obligatory that the defendant should send the boys to Oxford, although their names were on the rolls, so that they might be registered when the time came. Difficulties as regards being taken back into caste here had been insisted on but there would be no difficulty in that direction, if the boys were brought back to India. Further, the defendant had said in her cross-examination that Krishnamurthi could own nothing, that he would be a celibate. The influence of an order, of a special spiritual training, was very subtle, and the plaintiff might well consider that an order which made it a

matter of duty and necessity that a person should not marry, was not an order in which his sons should be trained. Religious influence is, said Counsel, the most subtle influence of all, and it is not for the welfare of the minors that they should be allowed to undergo training either by inner compulsion or outer compulsion that would condemn them to a life of celibacy and poverty, a life in which a man could not have a family or make money for himself or his dependents. It was said by the defendant that in spite of the vow of celibacy and poverty, the boys might rise to a seat in the Viceroy's Council. Was not the father entitled to say that his sons should not be marked out as persons who could not move in the world's ways, have a family and earn money, and to say that, in spite of the dazzling possibilities of a seat in the Council.? Again, it could not be said that it was conducive to the mental and moral good of the elder minor that he should be held to be a divine being. If he were told that he was superhuman, that he transcended human experience, he might grow free from moral restraints, he might have a tendency to justify any action of his through higher morals. For a year and a half that course of conduct had been persisted in, and it was now necessary to increase his age of majority, so that such a habit of mind might be eradicated. If he were brought away here, and placed in different circumstances and environments, good might come of him. So Council would ask the Court to raise the age of Krishnamurthi's majority and to make it possible for the boy to live again like an ordinary citizen. In the exhibits,

a description was given of what took place at Benares, on December 28, 1911, of the ceremony in which Krishnamurthi was regarded as Christ. For a long time the plaintiff had been under the spiritual influence of the defendant, and only in December, 1911, there was a change in the influence, and then he told Mrs. van Hook "The bubble is burst. My boy is being made a laughing stock."

Counsel asked if it was morally healthy for the boy that he should be regarded with reverence by elderly people like the defendant? That he should be the head of the Order of the Star in the East, which awaited the coming of Christ, and should have Mr. Arundale as his private secretary to attend to the affairs of that order? And Council asked if it is not necessary to divert the training of the boy now into more healthy channels?

Passing on to Mr. Leadbeter, Council said that his character should be scrutinised from an ordinary and conventional standpoint, although it had been stated by the defendant that he was a man of immaculate character and that it could not be a danger to anyone to associate with him. The plaintiff had set up one standard for her own witnesses and another for the defendant. The defendant's witnesses had said that they voted for the re-admission of Mr. Leadbeter into the Theosophical Society because the defendant sent word that he ought to be re-admitted. Mr. Ruspoli, a resident at Adyar, a high functionary connected with the Star in the East, and a private secretary to Mr. Leadbeter, had said, in his evidence, that he was ignorant of

the details of the charges made against Mr. Leadbeter in 1906, but he trusted his General Secretary, who had gone into the matter. So there was little wonder that the plaintiff did not go into the details of the charges made against Mr. Leadbeter, and that, when Mrs. Besant sent a circular saying that Mr. Leadbeter should be re-admitted, he believed there was no guilt attached to that gentleman. The plaintiff, like the witnesses for the defence, had believed in Mrs. Besant. Plaintiff said that he had heard vague rumours, and that later on, as a parent, he had enquired into the matter, and he had then obtained fuller knowledge. Counsel went on to say that Mr. Leadbeter held unconventional views and that his ideas moved in out of the way lines. He saw thought-forms in persons above puberty and below puberty, and he gave advice to lads solicited, and unsolicited. He descended below the ordinary level of morality to give such advice, and the Court should hesitate to allow such a person to be the custodian of the minors. Where was the guarantee that such a man would not continue to give such advice—advice essentially mischievous—in spite of all the promises he might have made to the defendant? There was documentary evidence to show that Mr. Leadbeter had said that "physical growth is frequently promoted by setting these currents in motion". He had stated in another place that he had weighed the advantages of the system, and he gave his scientific advice, as a doctor would give it. Was there any doctor who would give such advice? Could a man capable of giving such advice be entrusted

with the guardianship of the minors ? Such a man stood self-condemned and was an unsafe person to associate with. He had given such advice to persons unsolicited and without appeal. Such a man was not fit to go near decent society. Mr. Leadbeter stated that such advice was in existence in Church organizations and he appealed to such organizations in support of his opinions, although he said that his opinions differed slightly from those to be found in the Church of England. The advice had been given by Mr. Leadbeter to boys below puberty, on the ground of certain thought-forms, when boys were on the brink of evil. Though the advice was sometimes given to boys on appeal, and sometimes without appeal, it was always given without consulting the parents. In either case, Mr. Leadbeter considered the question as a physiological rather than as a moral problem. Was it not a moral problem ? Was it not one of the greates physical problems. ? Was it not a sin ? Mr. Leadbeter had said that his views were still the same as ever. Could His Lordship rely on the promises of Mr. Leadbeter to Mrs. Besant in such a matter ? Was not the danger to the minors resulting from a broken promise greater than the danger to the man arising from the broken promise, although it had been said that occult morality was far higher than morality of the ordinary kind ?

Counsel went on to point out how consistently the plaintiff had asked for the separation of his sons from Mr. Leadbeter. The plaintiff had had great reverence for the defendant, and up to the stage of the action he had not been on bad terms with her. The plaintiff had

insisted on the separation always, and he thought the defendant would fulfil his wishes. Until the defendant took the decisive attitude that the boys were indissolubly connected with Mr. Leadbeter during a number of lives and that therefore no separation was possible, the plaintiff was justified in hoping that the separation would ensue. The telegram of the 15th of January, 1912 (one of the exhibits) said "No trouble if boys study at Benares without Leadbeter." In January, 1912, it was said that the boys would be away from Mr. Leadbeter, and it was a mockery to say that Mrs. Besant meant that the separation would be only for a few weeks.

Here His Lordship read the document written after the plaintiff consented to allow his sons to go to England in January, 1912, and signed by 5 friends of Mrs. Besant, but which was not read to the plaintiff or signed by him.

After the luncheon interval, Counsel reviewed the evidence given for the plaintiff and for the defendant, and he said that he had expected to hear from the witnesses for the defence some explanation of the statement of the 19th of January, 1912. At Benares, it seemed, the plaintiff was in a state of great agitation and he spoke to Mrs. van Hook there and to the defendant. The plaintiff returned to Adyar, and the telegram "No trouble if boys study at Benares without Mr. Leadbeter" was sent to the defendant. After the receipt of the telegram, the defendant came to Adyar, and the learned Counsel submitted that the defendant,

knowing that a law suit was contemplated by the plaintiff, acted with a view to pacify the plaintiff and to put it off. Counsel said that at the same time a statement was taken from Lakshman with a view to have that evidence ready also. Only after the defendant wrote the letter from the Indian Ocean, dated February 7, 1912, was the suit launched. Immediately after Mrs. Besant's return to India the suit was filed. Counsel submitted that it would have been impossible for the plaintiff to institute this action earlier because the defendant was travelling from place to place.

The learned Counsel then proceeded to deal with the letter of guardianship given in March, 1910, and he said that from that document it was clear that the father wanted the boys to be under the guardianship of Mrs. Besant, and Mrs. Besant only. It was not the wish of the father that the boys should be in the hands of Mr. Leadbeter or anyone else, although he had agreed to their being educated temporarily by Mr. Leadbeter, during the absence of Mrs. Besant. The plaintiff had had great reverence for Mrs. Besant, and he had handed over the boys to her, and not to Mr. Leadbeter, and even if the boys were under the care of Mr. Leadbeter for their education, that did not prove that the father could not change his views. Counsel drew the attention of His Lordship to the fact that Mr. Leadbeter had tried to keep the boys away from their father and said that the plaintiff became suspicious of Mr. Leadbeter on this account. On the 24th of December, 1909, was the *Srartha* of the plaintiff's

mother, and Mr. Leadbeter was said to be anxious that the boys should not take their meals late that day, because, according to what he said, Krishnamurthi would have to perform the ceremony. In a letter from Mr. Leadbeter to the defendant, he said that the plaintiff must be kept away for one month, in Kashmir; and can it be suggested that this was in order to prevent the boys being kept without their meals until four o'clock on one day.? As a matter of fact the ceremony could only be performed by the eldest son of the family, and the other boys would not have to perform anything and would simply have to attend the ceremony. Counsel submitted that the ceremony referred to was not the *Srartha* ceremony but it was something else. The *Srartha* ceremony was a very important one among Hindus, it was one of the most important religious ceremonies, and it seemed to Counsel that the theory of preventing the boys from taking meals late that day would not be consistent with the training of the boys as Hindus. His submission was that the ceremony was the "initiation" ceremony, and Mr. Leadbeter was very anxious that the father should be kept away from that ceremony. Among Hindus the "initiation" ceremony was a new thing and it was not undergone in any stage of life except in the "*sanyasa asrmam.*" The plaintiff said that he had known nothing about the "initiation" ceremony. Sir Subramania Iyer was asked about the "initiation" ceremony, and he said that he knew nothing about it. The only evidence on the matter was that of the defendant, who said that she thought the plaintiff

must have known about it. "Initiation" is not recognised in the Hindu *Sastras*, and it is observed by Hindus only during "*Sanyasramam.*" All the reference to kutichaka, etc., referred only to Sanyasis. It was a curious thing that the boy was at Adyar, Mrs. Besant was at Benares, and the "initiation" was alleged to have taken place in Tibet. No earthly Court can act on such statements. Counsel submitted that the letter of guardianship, given by the plaintiff to the defendant in March 1910, showed the complete confidence that the plaintiff had in the defendant, and that it meant that and only that.

Passing on to the 18th of April, 1910, Counsel said it was suggested that the plaintiff had a bad fit or insanity then on account of the food trouble. He would explain the matter clearly so as to show that the trouble referred to neither milk, nor food, but was a trouble of a serious nature. A story had been invented to the effect that the plaintiff had discovered that the boys took milk in the morning and that he was horrified about it. The trouble was not so easily explicable. They had got on record the evidence that Sir Subramania Iyer had offered to take away the boys to his house that day. Unfortunately Sir Subramania was not asked about this by defendant when he gave his evidence. Counsel would place before His Lordship the fact that the trouble was so serious that Sir Subramania was asked to interfere. Would he be interfering about milk ? Subsequently a telegram was sent to the defendant. It was suggested by the defendant that if anything wrong had occurred, then the

plaintiff would have taken Sir Subramania into his confidence. It was also in evidence that Sir Subramania was a great friend of Mr. Leadbeter, and that the plaintiff was not willing to make such a serious allegation to Sir Subramania, who could not decide the matter, and he determined to wait for the return of Mrs. Besant. The letter written at that time by the plaintiff to Mr. Wadia was not produced. Sir Subramania seemed to have advised the plaintiff that he must not take the boys away before the return of the defendant. Considering all these circumstances the trouble could not have been such a trivial affair as was suggested. Seetharam Sastry had given evidence that the father then wanted to leave Adyar and go to Triplicane. Counsel humbly submitted that the trouble must have been something more than the trouble suggested for the defence. Witnesses for the defence had said that the father had complained that the boys were not afterwards allowed to go to him alone, as there was a guard kept on them. Under these circumstances Counsel would ask His Lordship to come to the conclusion that the trouble referred to was a grave one. Proceeding, Counsel said that Mrs. Besant returned to Adyar and the plaintiff then told her that he had seen "something nasty", and defendant said that she would give the boys separate bathrooms and make other arrangements. The whole of the evidence for the defence had been directed towards proving that the seeing of this nasty thing had been in February, and not in April, and prior to the giving of the letter of guardianship, and not afterwards. The plaintiff had never said that

he had seen the boy Nitya shivering on the verandah. The plaintiff was able to fix the date in April, from the correspondence and documents in the case. He would ask His Lordship, considering all the circumstances, to come to the conclusion that the trouble referred to was not any of those suggested by the defence, but was the one put forward by the plaintiff and that the defence had somewhat perfidiously antedated the complaint.

On resuming his address the following morning, the learned Counsel said that it had been stated by the defence that a certain programme was gone through regularly every morning at Adyar; but it was clear from the evidence that the programme was not rigidly adhered to, for some of the witnesses had fixed the work at 6-10 A.M., and others had said it was at 6, A.M., and so on. Witnesses had given different dates for the time when the bathing arrangements of the boys were altered. It was suggested that at the time of the incident someone would have been with the boy, and that therefore the incident could not have happened.

His Lordship asked :—

" Is there any evidence that the boys did not go to the father's house ?"

Counsel replied :—

" No evidence."

Referring to Lakshman, Counsel said that he was still a servant of the defendant. The plaintiff's information regarding what Lakshman had said came to him from Subbiah Chetti.

Mr. Schwartz's evidence was that Lakshman spoke to him about 2 or 3 years ago. He said that Lakshman told him that he saw some questionable conduct of Mr. Leadbeter with the boys and he told it to Mr. Wadia. The evidence of Mr. Wadia and Mr. Subbiah Chetty differed in many important respects. Mr. Subbiah Chetty said that he had been told that some bad act was committed. Mr. Wadia said "Subbiah Chetti said he did not know much Hindustani. I knew Hindustani Lakshman told me that something sexual had happened. Subbiah Chetti was with me when I talked to Lakshman."

Counsel submitted that what Lakshman saw was really in December 1910, and not in December 1909, and he pointed out that Lakshman had said that Krishuamurthi had a great name and fame, and in 1909 Krishnamurthi had no name or fame. In fact the defendant had not taken over the boys in December 1909. Lakshman further said "I thought it so bad that I told Subbiah Chetti, Wadia and others." That was a strong indication that what Lakshman had seen was long after March. There was another circumstance that would fix the date. The evidence of Mr. Bhagavan Das proved that the defendant had told him in March 1911 that she was taking the boys to England on account of the quarrel of Mr. G. Narayaniah and Mr. Leadbeter. The defendant said that when she returned to Adyar in February 1910 all was still. The statement of Mr. Bhagavan Das was rather consistent with the theory of the plaintiff than that of the defendant.

Lakshman had impressed on everyone that something objectionable had taken place, or something sexual, as Mr. Wadia had put it. "What else could it be? I had common sense enough." Mr. Wadia had said. And Mr. Schwartz had told Wadia that something sexual had happened. Subbiah Chetti said that something had happened, and Ranga Reddi said that Lakshman used the words "bad act." Lakshman had said that he had put his thumb mark to his statement, and his thumb was smeared with ink. No thumb mark was seen on his statement. The English note of Lakshman's statement was not produced. All these things showed that the witnesses had not given a correct statement of what had taken place and that the Court had not the right evidence before it. Much importance had been attached by the defendant to the short trips taken by the boys. With regard to the Madanapalli trip, the boys were not left in the charge of Mr. Leadbeter. The defendant and a number of people were with the boys when they went to Burma. Why should the boys have been taken away so often? Their education was not carried on during these trips, and that they were taken here and there was consistent with the evidence of the plaintiff. So long as the defendant was supervising the boys, the plaintiff had not so much insisted on the separation of his sons from Leadbeter; but what he objected to was that Leadbeter should have unrestricted access to the boys. After the Burma trip, the plaintiff complained to the defendant, for the story of Lakshman only became known to him while the boys were in Burma. What

Lakshman had told Subbiah Chetti and others was repeated to the plaintiff while the boys were in Burma. Mrs. Besant made absolutely no enquiry into the matter until December 1911 or January 1912.

His Lordship said :—

" It is a very grave offence. It shows some very extraordinary state of the Society. Everything seems to have gone on very smooth. The plaintiff had no objection to send his boys across the sea. It is an abominable offence. "

Counsel said :—

"So long as the defendant was there, the plaintiff was satisfied. If it is an infirmity of the plaintiff, it is an infirmity common to everybody in Adyar because none made any serious enquiry."

His Lordsihip said " That is what I say."

Counsel went on to speak of the sudden departure of Mr. Leadbeter from Benares in January 1912. That was a curious thing. The explanation was that the Masters were imperative on the subject. Counsel submitted that the departure of Mr. Leadbeter was really caused by the wire regarding a warrant or injunction. So Mr. Leadbeter went to Sicily and the defendant took the boys to England, interrupting their education at Benares.

Counsel proceeded to examine the evidence given by the witnesses for the defence, and he said that the defendant had stated that she would prove that the plaintiff had prostrated before Krishnamurthi, but not a word had been put to the witnesses

about it. Sir Subramania would speak, the defendant said, to the fact that the "initiation" was the cause of the letter of guardianship, but Sir Subramania had said that the plaintiff had said nothing to him about the "initiation," and that an University education for the boys was what had induced the plaintiff to sign the document of guardianship. Regarding the Lakshman story, no two witnesses had given the same version of it. It was said by the defendant that the plaintiff had made a serious imputation against his son. Unless there was a substratum of truth in it the father was the last person to make such statements. The father had said that he was constrained to be quiet, and he had foolishly spoken to some people about it in a time of excitement. The defendant herself said that when the father demanded complete separation from Leadbeter, he rushed into her room, crying and sobbing. That was not consistent with the motive of insane jealousy of Mr. Leadbeter that had been attributed to the plaintiff by the defendant. Counsel proceeded to point out the extreme improbability of the defendant's version of Lakshman's story with regard to the bath. "What have you done? Is it a bath?". Mrs. Besant asked Mr. Leadbeter as soon as plaintiff complained in February 1910. When asked why she put such a question to Mr. Leadbeter, the defendant said that she had told Mr. Leadbeter not to bathe without some sort of covering, as to do so would shock an Indian boy. Mrs. Besant said that according to English habits there would be no covering on the body while

bathing. Mr. Leadbeter had said that he had always some covering while bathing before another person. Counsel submitted that it was not a harmless bath, as suggested by the defendant, but something more. The career of Mr. Leadbeter also went against him. Mr. Leadbeter held certain views, based on thought-forms, and he had never repudiated those views. Counsel would therefore ask His Lordship to hold, whether the details put forward were proved or not, that Mr. Leadbeter was not one with whom the boys ought to be allowed to associate. A gentleman holding such views was a positive danger to civilization. The younger minor was not yet 15, and there was no guarantee that the boys would not be allowed to associate with Mr. Leadbeter, if they were left with the defendant. And the younger minor had also gone through the "initiation" ceremony and taken the attendant vows.

Regarding the comparative veracity of the plaintiff and the defendant, Counsel pointed out that the defendant had said that she is more than human, that she is in direct communication with the Inner Head of the Society who is a superhuman being ; and Mr. Leadbeter had said that he and the defendant had seen the Lord of the World face to face, and the defendant had accepted his statement. Both of them posed before the world as being superhuman. The defendant had either a diseased imagination, or she was not speaking the truth. The defendant said that while her body was at Benares, she was at Adyar in spirit, and that, during the

" initiation " of the boys, she herself went to Tibet. These matters could not be decided by His Lordship, but they should be taken into consideration in deciding the relative credibility of the witnesses. It has been elicited in cross-examination that Mr. Jinaraja Dasa was now the tutor of the minors, a gentleman whose opinions were as unconventional as those of Mr. Leadbeter, and a statement made by that gentleman concerning the opinions was among the exhibits.

His Lordship here perused Mr. Jinaraja Dasa's statement.

Concluding Counsel said:—

" Both these boys are put forward as initiates and both of them are trained in a kind of mystical atmosphere. There is an air of divinity which surrounds them, and they are being brought up in a delusion, the result of unreasoning and abnormal brains, and worship is being showered upon them. That is not a proper system of education. The object of education is " to bring sunshine to the heart and to remove moonshine from the head." The course of education pursued in this case is the very opposite of that. It has filled the boys with vague mysticism which makes them think that they are superhuman beings. One of them is the chosen instrument of Lord Maitreya, the other an initiate, so forth and so on. Is that the training which your Lordship would countenance ? The training given to them is not the common training given to boys all over the world, but it is one which makes them neither fitted for marriage nor to earn anything for themselves.

They could have no marriage or progeny. Such a training must be put a stop to at once. What has been operating in the mind of the defendant is not the education of the boys but exploitation. Your Lordship should see that the boys are trained as normal and ordinary human beings. Something was said with regard to the choice of the children. They are not here before your Lordship and they have not made any choice. If they had been here, they would have been questioned about it. Your Lordship could then have been able to ascertain the real needs of the boys. The boys are not here and the fault is not with the plaintiff but with the defendant in the matter. It is necessary that the elder boy should be made a ward of the Court and twenty-one years should be fixed as the age of his majority. So far as the younger boy is concerned, he is only 15. If your Lordship makes him also a ward of the Court, his majority will come six years hence. If they are brought back and trained in an ordinary manner all these ideas will be eradicated from their minds. The father has mentioned that for the education of the boys he would deposit Rs. 10.000 in Court, subject to any stipulation that may be made by the Court. The suit is a *bona fide* one. It is not due to mad or insane jealousy, or ill-will, as was often put forward by the defendant. It might be that the father had changed his views, but he was entitled to protect the boys from mystical training and to see to the change of the influence which the defendant was imposing upon them. The boys should be separated

from the defendant and should be restored to the custody of the father. The welfare of the children is not merely the welfare as judged by the Court between two rival persons, who are not really interested in the minors, but the welfare consistent with the natural laws. A father could be deprived of the custody of his children only when he is absolutely incapacitated to look after the moral and intellectual welfare of the boys. It is said by the defence that the father by bringing this suit, is not entitled to the custody of the boys because he has absolutely neglected the boys and the boys have been charged with moral turpitude by the father himself. If the plaintiff has made grave charges, they have been made only for the benefit and interest of the minors with a view to bring them back. He makes charges against Mr. Leadbeter and they are under the influence of Mr. Leadbeter and must be liberated from that influence. The plaintiff had been demanding the custody of the boys from December 1911. If he has not got the boys, he is entitled to revoke the agreement and to get them back. It is said that the proceedings are the result of irritation. The proceedings might have their origin in some irritation, due to the conduct of the defendant, but are not caused by petty jealousy. That ought not to weigh with your Lordship. I hope, your Lordship will come to the conclusion that the removal of the boys from the defendant is essential for their safety. (28 Law Journal Chancery Division was here quoted by Counsel). The removal from

the custody of the defendant, from Mr. Leadbeter and his collaborators is essential for the children. In this case, as in Dr. Bernardo's case very grave charges are made by the defendant against the plaintiff—charges of cruelty, of emaciation and of deliberately murdering a number of his children. The very same state of things existed in Dr. Bernardo's case and the very same tactics were adopted by Dr. Bernardo. The conduct of the defendant is not above suspicion. She has adopted discreditable tactics and she has not even attempted to prove the charges against the plaintiff. The boys should be given back and subjected to the normal healthy training usually given in the case of boys to make them citizens useful to Society; and should be removed from the influences of mysticism which have damped their moral and intellectual fibre. It is therefore essential that the boys should be separated from the defendant and restored to the custody of the father. If your Lordship pleases the father might be associated with somebody else who might be willing to be appointed as guardian."

His Lordship announced that Judgment would be given on Tuesday, April 15, at 11, A.M.

CHAPTER XIX.

Judgment.

In the High Court of Judicature at Madras, Original Civil Jurisdiction, Tuesday, the 15th day of April, 1913, the following Judgment was given by the Honourable Mr. Justice Bakewell in the case of G. Narayaniah *Vs.* Mrs. Annie Besant.

The plaintiff had been since 1882 a member, and the defendant is President, of the Theosophical Society which has its head-quarters at Adyar in the Chingleput District, near the southern boundary of the city of Madras. The plaintiff is an orthodox Hindu, Brahmin by caste and a retired Tahsildar. He has had ten children and has four sons living. In January 1908 he offered his services to the defendant, who refused them, but on 17th December 1908, through the influence of friends, he became well acquainted with the defendant and obtained a secretarial post under her, and in January 1909 he and his family, including his brother-in-law and wife and other dependants, took up their residence at Adyar in a building belonging to the Society which he occupied rent free. He was subsequently given additional duties, all of which he performed gratuitously. In September 1909 he removed two of his sons, Krishnamurthi and Nityananda, from their school at Mylapore and they were taught gratuitously at Adyar by Messrs. Leadbeter, Clarke, S. V. Subramaniam and other residents there, as well as by the plaintiff. In December 1909 the defendant came to Adyar and made

the acquaintance of these boys, who were then aged 15 and 11, respectively. Later in the same month at Benares the defendant told the plaintiff that something great and good was going to happen to Krishnamurthi, and plaintiff was not to throw any obstacles in Mr. Leadbeter's way. In January 1910 the plaintiff returned to Adyar, and later in the same month some "initiation" took place with respect to Krishnamurthi. The plaintiff consented to this ceremony and as a member and officer of the Society and a member of an inner circle called Esoteric Section, was undoubtedly aware of the importance attached by defendant and Mr. Leadbeter to this ceremony. In February 1910 the defendant returned to Adyar and proposed to take charge of the boys, Krishnamurthi and Nityananda, and give them an English education. There is no doubt that the plaintiff was perfectly well aware that the motive operating upon the defendant was the preceding "initiation" of Krishnamurthi and that she desired to bring up the two boys in such a manner as is develop their spiritual powers, and presumably to promulgate the peculiar tenets of the Society; but I do not think the plaintiff or the defendant herself then contemplated the development of the boy Krishnamurthi into a vehicle for the manifestation of supernatural powers or persons. The defendant herself has stated that matters developed in course of time. On the 6th March 1910 plaintiff signed a letter (Ex. A) appointing defendant guardian of his two sons. The defendant as the head of an occult society, professing mysterious powers, must have greatly

influenced the plaintiff in the execution of the agreement (Ex. A), but it is evident that he was not helpless in her hands for Ex. A-1 and A-2 show that there was considerable discussion as to the terms of the agreement and plaintiff took the advice of a very eminent lawyer and ex-Judge of this Court, as to the legal effect of the document he was executing. The plaintiff was with a large number of dependants, living rent free in the Society's premises, and his position as an office bearer of the Society and member of an inner circle was no doubt of importance to him; and these considerations as well as the additional prestige he might obtain through his sons, and the advantage to them of an English education, would strongly influence him and are sufficient to explain his agreeing to make defendant the guardian of his sons. The evidence of the plaintiff himself does not show that there was any undue influence exercised by the defendant and I answer the 5th issue in the negative.

The plaintiff alleges that about 14th of April, 1910, that is shortly after the agreement, he witnessed the incident described in paragraph 5 of the plaint and paragraph I of the particulars. Matters however went on much the same at Adyar and Mr. Leadbeter still took part in the education of the boys. Plaintiff also alleged that in January 1911 he was told by some residents at Adyar that Lakshman, a servant of the defendant, had seen the incident mentioned in paragraph 2 of the particulars, and that in February 1911 he complained strongly to the defendant that the boys

should not be allowed to associate any longer with Mr. Leadbeter.

In March 1911 the defendant took the boys to Benares and thence to England, and in October 1911 they returned to Adyar and remained there until December 1911, when Mr. Leadbeter, who had been throughout at Adyar, took them to Benares. Plaintiff alleges that some time between October and December the defendant spoke of a further ceremony for the boys, who were to be entrusted to Mr. Leadbeter, and the plaintiff objected to their being with the latter. On the 28th December 1911 a meeting of an inner Order of the Society, of which the boy Krishnamurthi has been made the head, took place, at which the idea of his being a "vehicle" for extraordinary powers seems to have been fully developed. On 31st December 1911 Mrs. van Hook (D. W. 2) had a conversation with the plaintiff: she says " I saw plaintiff looking depressed, and he said he was harassed by people with regard to his sons, and that he had sold them to the defendant, and he regarded the ceremony of 28th December 1911 as a possible source of ridicule, and he said the boy was being put in a false position and he and his sons would be the laughing stock of India. He said "You would not believe in Leadbeter if you knew what I know." And he then accused Mr. Leadbeter of the incident described in para I of the particulars. On the same day plaintiff went to the defendant and demanded that the boy should be separated from Mr. Leadbeter and referred defendant to Mrs. van

Hook for the reason. The defendant refused plaintiff's request. Plaintiff returned to Adyar the beginning of January 1912, and made complaints to various persons at Adyar, and it appears from a telegram sent about 10th January 1912 by Mr. Wadia to defendant at Benares, that he had threatened to take legal proceedings. On the 19th January 1912, an interview took place at Adyar between plaintiff and defendant, and several members of the Society, with respect to the custody of the plaintiff's sons. There are discrepant accounts as to what took place, but I think that it is clear from Ex. II, a note of the proceedings made at the time, that the plaintiff raised the question of the separation of the boys from Mr. Leadbeter and that the defendant said that she had affected a separation and that the plaintiff thereupon agreed that the boys should go to England. Mr. Leadbeter had already left India, somewhat abruptly, about 13th January 1912, and on 26th January defendant left Adyar with the two boys for Benares and shortly afterwards took them to England. It would seem from a letter dated 7th February (Ex. LL.) addressed by defendant to plaintiff, that she had been informed by persons at Benares or Adyar that the plaintiff had been making enquiries of Lakshman, her servant, with respect to the charge against Mr. Leadbeter contained in the second para of the particulars, and by this letter she called on the plaintiff to leave Adyar and stated that she intended to keep his sons in Europe. It is in fact a declaration of war. Defendant admits that she subsequently left the

plaintiff's sons with Mr. Leadbeter and other friends in Sicily, and that they went with him to Genoa and thence to England. The defendant returned to Adyar in October 1912, leaving the plaintiff's children in England, and the plaintiff at once commenced a suit in the District Court of Chingleput for an order directing the defendant to hand over his children to him. The suit was removed from that Court by an order made under Clause 13 of the Letters Patent and has been tried by this Court in the exercise of its extraordinary original civil jurisdiction. Both parties to this suit have admitted that they have been financed in this litigation by third parties and this fact and the offer made by the plaintiff's Vakil to deposit Rs. 10,000 in Court on behalf of the minors and to procure some prominent citizens of Madras to act as their guardian shows that some question other than the welfare of the children has influenced this litigation. I have held that the matter before the Court is the welfare of the children and have refused to permit the intrusion of extraneous matters, but it is evident that there have been influences which effect the evidence given in the case. On the one hand there has been a strong animus against the defendant and her colleague, Mr. Leadbeter, and on the other hand they have been supported by disciples who can see no wrong in either of them. Moreover many of the facts spoken to took place three years and more ago, and this must affect the evidence of the witnesses, especially as to dates.

I now proceed to consider the evidence as to the charges contained in para 5 of the plaint and paras 1 and 2 of the particulars which form the subject of the 6th issue. It is clear that the plaintift's children were first selected as likely subjects for training in the tenets of the Society by Mr. Leadbeter, who professes to have peculiar powers in this respect, and that it was through his influence that the defendant was induced to take an interest in them and from the first Mr. Leadbeter desired to get the children under his own control, and out of that of the plaintiff whom he regarded as an obstacle to his own purposes (See Mr. Leadbeter's letters Exs. W2, W3, and W4, dated December 1909 and Ex. Y1, dated 3rd January 1910).

Naturally after the signature of the letter of guardianship of the 6th March 1913, Mr. Leadbeter, as the delegate of the defendant, would attempt to exercise the powers which it purported to confer upon her and naturally also the plaintiff would resent the slight to his parental authority. From his demeanour in the witness box I should say that the plaintiff is of an emotional temperament, prone to tears, and not capable of much self-control, and I can readily credit the statements of some of the defence witnesses that he showed himself a jealous and suspicious father. It must be remembered also, that the plaintiff is an orthodox Brahmin, and would be naturally suspicious that a European might lead his sons into some violation of the caste rules and would be tempted to spy upon his conduct. The only direct evidence as to the incident in para 1 of the

particulars is that of the plaintiff and Mr. Leadbeter, and the conduct of the plaintiff at the time is of the first importance. The charge made in the original plaint was of a criminal offence, and the act is stated to have occurred in or about the latter part of March 1910, but when the plaint was ordered to be amended, this charge was abandoned, and the act now described in para 1 of the particulars was substituted, and the date of the occurrence was given as the second week of April 1910. If the plaintiff originally believed that a disgusting crime had been committed upon his son, or even that his son's person had been treated indecently, as he now alleges, and that by a man whom he would regard as a Pariah, it is difficult to believe that he would not have gone weeping to his house with his sons and complained to his household. His brother-in-law, who lived with him, and in whom he would naturally confide, has not been called, and plaintiff admits that he did nothing but reprimand the children and keep them from going to Mr. Leadbeter. In cross-examination he said "I only scolded the boy elder for being naked" and also said "This occurrence was not made known to any person at Adyar until the quarrel on the 18th of April. It did not strike me to wire to the defendant. There was no elder member whom I might complain to, to whom I could speak in confidence. I was in great distress at this time, but I did not wish to make it public and managed not to show it." I do not believe the plantiff to be capable of this Spartan fortitude. It is admitted that there was a quarrel between the plaintiff and

Mr. Leadbeter on the 18th of April and Sir Subramania Aiyar was called in to compose matters and that a telegram was despatched to the defendant in the joint names of Sir Subramania Aiyar and the plaintiff to the effect "Do not be anxious. All is right". Plaintiff made no complaint of the alleged occurrence to Sir Subramania Aiyar, who was Vice-President of the Society, and represented defendant during her absance from Adyar, and whom the plaintiff had consulted as to the legal effects of the letter of guardianship and various business matters connected with the Society. Plaintiff allowed his sons to associate with Mr. Leadbeter during the following months, and even left them in his charge during a short absence of himself and defendant from Adyar. Plaintiff explains the different dates of the occurrence given in the plaint and the particulars by saying that he had made further enquiry and fixed the latter date by reference to the Telugu New Year's Day, which would make the date about 12th April, but in his cross-examination he gives the date as 14th or 15th April, and stated it was not the 16th which his learned Vakil has argued was the correct date with reference to an expression in Mr. Leadbeter's letter on 18th April Ex. Y. 5. These changes in the nature and the date of the occurrence, and the inconsistent conduct of the plaintiff at the time, show that his evidence is not to be relied, on. Mr. Leadbeter's denial of plaintiff's story is on the other hand confirmed by the public nature of the room in which the act is said to have occurred and the daily routine to which defendant's witnesses have spoken.

The second charge contained in para 2 of the particulars is of a criminal offence and the only direct evidence is that of Lakshman, defendant's servant, who at the request of both parties was called as a Court witness. The plaintiff alleged that he heard of the occurrence in January and February 1911 from various persons at Adyar, to whom Lakshman had spoken, and that he complained to defendant on her return from Burma in February 1911 where she had gone for January 1911, with Mr. Leadbeter, the plaintiff's sons and other persons. He stated that he complained to the defendant that the boys should not be allowed to associate with Mr. Leadbeter and that he made no enquiry of Lakshman and he does not appear to have made any complaint with respect to the present charge. In cross-examination he stated that he first heard of the occurrence in December 1910, and if this be true he allowed his sons to leave his care in the company of a man, who he had reason to suppose had just committed a disgusting crime upon one of them. He also appears to have been satisfied with defendant's promise, made upon his complaint, that she would shortly take the boys to England, and to have allowed his sons to have associated with Mr. Leadbeter until they left Adyar in the following month.

In December 1911, when he was undoubtedly agitated by the recent developments in his elder son's training, he commissioned Mr. Bhagavan Das (P. W. 3. on Commission) to enquire into Lakshman's story. This witness states that Lakshman informed that " on opening

the door he saw Mr. Leadbeter standing with a leg on a chair or sofa or some such thing and the elder boy was sitting on his knee, and both were naked". A curious inquiry and examination of Lakshman was made in March 1912 by several of the plaintiff's witnesses examined on Commission..

The account of Lakshman's story given by Pandit Bhavani Shankar (P. W. 4, on commission) is that "he went to the bath room of Mrs. Besant with the object of fetching a lota. When he entered in he saw Leadbeter and J. Krishnamurthi naked and standing behind one another. When he saw them in that state he came out and muttered, etc., it was in an evening." Dhana Krishna Biswas (P. W. 6, on commission) gives practically the same story and states that after the institution of this suit he met Lakshman and encouraged him to speak the truth. A European woman (P. W. 5, on commission) was also present at the enquiry but did not understand the language used. It may be observed that this later account differs from that given by Bagavan Das, and from Lakshman's evidence before the Court, and that the statement was not apparently reduced to writing.

On the 26th of January 1912 Lakshman also made a statement, (Ex. L.) to Mr. Iqbal Narain Gurtu and defendant, which omits the fact that the boy had no clothing. Lakshman's evidence is that he went to Mr. Leadbeter's bungalow, at the time of 11 (eleven) o'clock morning meal, to call him and to fetch a towel, he opened the door of the bathroom and saw Krishnamurthi

and Leadbeter. Krishnamurthi's cloth was wet, it was all down. Mr. Leadbeter had a coat above his knees and nothing below, his knee was resting on a chair and Krishnamurthi was standing in front of him. Leadbeter's hand was on the boy's hair. When the witness saw nakedness he could say nothing and went back. In cross-examination by the plaintiff he said "the boy had no cloth on his body, his cloth had fallen down, he was holding it by one hand. Hindus usually don't bathe naked. It is sinful. I do not think Mr. Leadbeter was doing wrong." In cross-examination by the defendant he said "What I was shocked at was that Krishnamurthi had not his cloth on. The wet cloth was on the ground. Leadbeter was combing the boy's hair. He had on a *kartha* to the waist." Other witnesses have stated that Lakshman, in describing the occurrence to them, stated that he had seen something bad. Mr. Leadbeter denies the charge and explains it by saying that he found it necessary to cleanse the boy and that he had been with the boy in the bathroom once or twice and taught him to bathe in English fashion without clothing.

It is impossible that the plaintiff could have believed when he first heard the story that an offence had been committed, since his whole conduct is consistent with a belief that the occurrence was only a violation of caste rules. He made no investigation into the story until December 1911, when he was evidently strongly prejudiced against Mr. Leadbeter and was determined to enforce a separation from his sons, his first complaint

only related to this separation and he permitted their association afterwards, he seems to have made no such charge at the meeting 1st January 1912 when he raised the question of this separation, and the enquiry of the witnesses at Benares was evidently for the purposes of this suit. When the plaintiff asked Sir Subramania Aiyar as to the legal effect of the guardianship letter (Ex. A.) he was advised that if he executed it he would have waived his right as father and would not be able to revoke it at will and the Court would consider what was best for the interests of the children, and it seems to me that this opinion induced the plaintiff to search for something which would influence the Court in revoking the agreement and has caused the revival of the charges made against Mr. Leadbeter in 1906 and has in fact coloured all the evidence in this case.

I am of opinion that plaintiff's evidence is not reliable, that Lakshman's evidence has not established that an offence was committed, and that the 6th and 7th issues must be answered in the negative.

Mr. Leadbeter admitted in his evidence that he has held, and even now holds, opinions which I need only describe as certainly immoral and such as to unfit him to be the tutor of boys, and taken in conjunction with his professed power to detect the approach of impure thoughts, render him a highly dangerous associate for children. It is true that both he and defendant declared that he has promised not to express or practise those opinions, but no father should be obliged to depend upon a promise of this kind. The law upon the subject of

the custody of minor children by their father has been repeatedly declared by high authority and is perfectly clear. A father is under certain legal and moral duties to his children with respect to their maintenance, education and up-bringing, and in order that he may perform those duties is entitled to their custody, and he cannot free himself from those duties or divest himself of the corresponding rights. Any delegation of guardianship by him is accordingly revocable, and an agreement to the contrary is void. A parent may be unfit to perform his duties and may thus lose his right to the custody of his child, and the Court in exercise of the prerogative of the Crown as *parens patriae* will enquire whether a father has conducted himself so that the welfare of his child demands that he should be deprived of his rights of guardianship. In support of these propositions I may refer to a recent judgment of Wallis J. in Pollard *v.* Rouse 33 Mad. 288, also to the cases in 1891, I. Q. B. 194, 1891. A. C. 388, 24, Ch. D. 317. At the settlement of issues I enquired what charges the defendant desired to make against the plaintiff, and the 9th issue as to the fitness of the plaintiff was intentionally limited to the plaintiff's knowledge of the facts in the 6th, 7th and 8th issues. I have found that the alleged acts were not committed. Since I have found that the alleged acts were not committed, there is no allegation against the fitness of the plaintiff to be the guardian of his children. He has, in my opinion, attempted to strengthen his case with lies, but that cannot be said to render him unfit. I am of opinion

that the plaintiff was not aware at the date of the letter, Ex. A, that his son Krishnamurthi was to be brought up to consider himself a "vehicle" for the manifestation of supernatural powers or persons, or that his children were to be devoted to a life of poverty and celibacy, conditions naturally repugnant to an ex-Tahsildar and the father of ten children, and that in any case he is entitled to insist that this training shall not be continued and that he was also entitled to insist that his children should not be allowed to associate with a person of Mr. Leadbeter's opinions, and now that his wishes have been disregarded, he can demand that his children shall be restored to his custody. I think also that the plaintiff only consented to the removal of the children from India, and therefore from his personal supervision, on the understanding that they should not associate with the person from whom he apprehended danger. Defendant has argued that she is able to educate the plaintiff's children in a manner, and to give them a social standing, such as are beyond the plaintiff's means, and has already expended considerable sums of money upon them, but she has not provided any irrevocable endowment of the children for these purposes. It is quite clear that any expenditure which the defendant has already incurred cannot give her any right to the custody of the children. A father moreover, is the best judge of the education and training which are suited to his children, and may well think that they will be happier and better trained in their natural environment, than in a foreign land and in a society which may in the

future make them strangers to their own kindred and to the society in which they were born.

The defendant has abandoned the first two issues, but I think it is desirable that I should express an opinion upon them in case the matter should go before another Court. With regard to jurisdiction, the plaintiff's children are subjects of the King Emperor domiciled in British India, and are only temporarily resident in England where they were taken by defendant for purposes of education. The defendant has also, in my opinion, broken the understanding by which she was allowed to take them beyond the jurisdiction. In these circumstances I am clear that this Court has jurisdiction to pass orders as to the custody of the children, and is bound to enforce such orders by all means in its power, and I have no doubt that the English Courts will assist this Court by their process. In this connection I need only refer to the cases in 4 De G. and Mac. 328. and 30 Ch. 32. The second issue does not really arise, since it is provided by Sec. 3 of the Guardian and Wards Act of 1890 that the provisions of that Act shall not affect the powers of the High Court. I am of opinion for the reasons I have given that it is necessary in the interests of the children and for their future protection that they should be declared wards of Court, and I declare accordingly. I also direct the defendant to hand over the custody of the two boys, Krishnamurthi and Nityananda, to the plaintiff on or before the 26th of May, 1913. With regard to the costs of the case, this trial has been unduly protracted and considerable expense has been caused by

the charges which were made by the plaintiff and I find not to have been proved. I therefore direct him to pay the costs of the suit and the defendant's including the costs of the several commissions and all costs expressly reserved.

(Sd.) J. H. B.
18-4-15.

Certified to be a true copy.
Dated this 19th day of April 1913.

G. WHITE.
Second Assistant Registrar.

APPENDIX.

EXHIBITS IN THE CASE OF G. NARAYANIAH *Vs.* Mrs. BESANT.

Letter given by Mr. G. Narayaniah to Mrs. Besant, making her the Guardian of his sons, J. Krishnamurthi and J. Nityanandam.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ADYAR,
6th March, 1910.

Copy.

To—Mrs. Annie Besant,

RESPECTED MADAM AND MOTHER,

When after my retirement from public service, I came to reside at the Theosophical Society's Head-quarters, at Adyar, according to my long cherished wish to do such work of the Society as may be entrusted to me, two of my sons, Krishnamurthi and Nityanandam, who are now respectively of the ages of 14 and 11, came to live with me at the Head-quarters, along with my two other sons. Because the treatment given to these two boys (Krishnamurthi and Nityanandam) in the School, to which they were then going, was found to be unsatisfactory, I stopped them from the school, as some of the other members of the Society residing at the Head-quarters kindly undertook to attend to, and have been attending to, their education under your supervision. I find this arrangement has been conducive to the improvement

of their health, which is delicate. Their progress in their studies has also been satisfactory, instruction being given to them in English and Sanskrit. They are getting sound religious instruction, also, a matter to which I attach the greatest importance. It is with utmost gratification I find you have conceived great affection for both these children of mine, and that young as they are, they fully appreciate and reciprocate it.

Unsolicited by me, you have resolved to bear the cost of their maintenance and education while they are under the age of 25 years and have further made a provision for it in your will. Being fully convinced that until they grow up and become fit to enter upon life they cannot be in better supervision than yours, it is my wish that you alone should be the guardian of their persons during their minority. And accordingly I hereby constitute you their guardian and authorise you to act as such henceforward.

As my desire is that you and you alone should be their guardian, I do not give you power to transfer the guardianship I give you, to any other but to myself, in case you find any necessity to do so. If you happen to pass away from your present body before I do, the guardianship which is hereby vested in you should naturally revert to me, if I happen to live till then, or to such persons whom I may appoint for that purpose. If by the time you and I pass away from this world these boys should still be minors (under 25 years of age), their guardianship must then vest in the persons appointed by me for that purpose, in my will.

I beg to remain,
Dear Mother,
Your most dutiful,

(Sd.) G. Narayaniah.

Statement concerning the plaintiff's permission to take the boys to England, written after he had left the room, and not signed by him.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.
SHANTI KUNJA, BANARES CITY.
President's Office, January 19th 1912.

In presence of us, the undersigned, Mr. G. Narayaniah stated in answer to the question from Sir. S. Subramania Iyer, " You have no objection to the boys being taken to England ?" Mr. Narayaniah answered " I have already told you so. " Sir S. Subramania pressed the question, and he answered: " I have no objection. " Mrs. Besant said she had met Mr. Narayaniah's wishes on both points he had asked for: she had separated the boys from Mr. Leadbeter, and had taken tickets for them to England ; did he want anything else ? He said " no ".

(Sd.) ANNIE BESANT.
S. SUBRAMANIER.
A. K. SITARAMASHASTRI.
G. SUBBIAH CHETTY.
B. RANGA REDDY.
B. P. WADIA.

True copy.

ANNIE BESANT.

Date originally written in error was January 18th. Subsequently corrected on reference to diary by writer.

A. B.

Statement made by Lakshman, Mrs. Besant's servant. This will be found also in Chapter 5, in a letter from the plaintiff to the defendant.

SHANTI KUNJA.
28th January, 1912.

It is altogether untrue what Narayana Sahib has said that I peeped at Leadbeter Sahib through a (pane of) glass in the bungalow at Adyar and saw him committing a bad act.

One day I went into his bathroom, running to bring a towel, and here I found Leadbeter Sahib not fully dressed. I again came out soon. I merely saw Leadbeter Sahib standing with (his) knee resting on a chair, Krishnaji was standing in front of him and Leadbeter Sahib was setting his hair right. I did not see anything else.

(Sd). LAKSHMAN,
(In English)

Witnessed by,
Annie Basant.
Iqbal Narain Gurtu.

Letter speaking of the unnecessary expense it would be to take the boys to Europe.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.
SHANTI KUNJA, BENARES CITY.
January, 13th, 1912.

DEAR SIR,

At our interview here, before you left for Adyar, when I said it might be better for me to take Krishnamurti and Nityananda to Europe with me, you stated that that would quite satisfy you. Despite the unnecessary expense, for the sake of peace, I have taken tickets for them, and they will accompany me. As I shall

only be in Adyar for a fortnight, I am leaving them here in charge of the Principal of the Central Hindu College, to continue the studies I had arranged for them, and they will meet me in Bombay.

Sincerely,

(Sd). ANNIE BESANT.

Telegram sent on the 15th of January, 1912, on receipt of this letter.

No trouble if boys remain Benares for study without Mr. Leadbeter.

(Sd). SUBBIAH.

Copy of Letter sent by Mrs. Besant to Mr. K. S. Sastri.

82, DRAYTON GARDENS, LONDON, S. W.

June 4th, 1912.

MY DEAR SON,

Enclosed is all there is.

I told Mr. Narayaniah myself last autumn that I hoped Krishna would take a step this spring and that Nitya would be admitted, and that they must be in seclusion for three months. He was the only person I told, because he was the father. When he made his shameful attack, and I was obliged to take the boys away in order to secure the work that had to be done, I did not dare to risk the upsetting of Krishna by his father writing these horrible accusations and trying to set him against me. If Mr. Narayaniah sends me a withdrawal of his charge against his son, I shall tell Krishna that he had better write to his father. Mr. Narayaniah was quite willing last year that his sons should stay altogether in England. He thought their absence would save him from much pressure from his relatives and friends. So he need not fret now that he has his wish. He then told me that he had

no objection to my leaving them there. In any case they would have had to leave next year.

I daresay Mr. Narayaniah can make it impossible for the boys to go to Oxford, but I do not see what he would gain. Nitya is likely to take a brilliant degree and bring much credit to his family, unless his father ruins him. Both Mr. Leadbeter and I are quite indifferent as to Krishna taking a degree. A degree is of no value to a spiritual teacher, and Nitya's degree would bring no credit to us, but only to his family. If Mr. Narayaniah chooses to make a definite statement withdrawing all his charges, signed by himself, and witnessed by you, and say Mr. Ramachandra Row, I will, for Kriahna's sake, forgive him the past, and let him live in the Blavatsky Garden compound or that of Damodar Gardens, or Besant Gardens.

Yours affectionately.
(Sd). ANNIE BESANT.

Letter to Mr. Narayaniah from Mr. T. Ramachanda Row.

COIMBATORE,
April 22nd, 1912.

Y DEAR NARAYANIAH.

Your kind letter duly to hand. I am powerless to do anything...............As to your own affair, I am sorry nothing has been done to make you change your mind. I have not heard in reply to my letter. If you think my word is worth anything, I would strongly advise you to wait for the return of our Teaeher to India, for I am hopeful that something will be done to set all matters right. You and the boys will gain nothing by the step you intend to take. Kindly postpone all action till the Teacher's return.

Yours affectionately,
(Sd). T. RAMACHANDRA RAO.

Issues framed in the Case of Mr. G. Narayaniah *Vs.* Mrs. Annie Besant.

1. Has this Court jurisdiction to entertain this suit, the residence of the minors being outside British India?

(*a*) Has the defendant waived objection to the jurisdiction?

2. Do the provisions of the Guardian and Wards Act, 1890, apply to this suit?

3. Is the plaintiff entitled to revoke the authority given by him to the defendant to have the custody and guardianship of his children?

4. Was the plaintiff entitled to give an irrevocable authority to the defendant over his children?

5. Was the plaintiff when he granted the said authority prevented from the free exercise of his will by reason of the spiritual influence of the defendant?

6. Has either of the children been party to the acts mentioned in paragraph 5 of the plaint?

7. Was the defendant aware of the said acts, and did she with knowledge thereof permit the children to associate with the person committing the same?

8. Did the defendant permit the children to associate with a person of immoral character?

9. Was the plaintiff aware of the facts mentioned in issues 6, 7 and 8, and is she thereby unfit to have the custody and guardianship of his children?

10. Has the defendant stated that the elder boy is or is going to be Lord Christ or Lord Maitreya?

11. To what relief, if any, is the plaintiff entitled?

Pledge taken by G. Narayaniah to H. P. Blavatsky in 1891.

1. I pledge myself to endeavour to make Theosophy a living power in my life.

2. I pledge myself to support before the world the Theosophical movement and those of its leaders and members in whom I have full confidence, and in particular to obey, without cavil or delay, the orders given through the Head of the Esoteric Section, in all that concerns my Theosophical duties and Esoteric work, so far as my pledge to my Higher Self and my conscience sanction.

3. I pledge myself never to listen, without protest, to any evil thing spoken falsely, or yet unproven, of a brother Theosophist, and to abstain from condemning others.

4. I pledge myself to do all in my power by study or otherwise to fit myself to help and teach others.

5. I pledge myself to give what support I can to the movement in time, money and work.

6. I pledge myself to preserve secrecy as regards the signs and pass words of the Section and all confidential documents.

7. To all of which I pledge my most solemn and sacred word of honour. So help me my Higher Self.

Foreword written by Mrs. Taylor to the account of Krishnamurthi which has been condensed in Chapter III. This account was signed by Mr. Narayaniah, and it was one of the Exhibits in the High Court Case.

"The resolve to produce the following pages came about in this way. One morning, during the hour of meditation, the enormity of what it had meant to the world to have no authentic account, or statement, of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, passed

through my mind as a "whole thought." I cannot describe it in any other way. it was as when one looks at a picture and sees the whole without buildings in the details. The history of the world repeats itself. In every country of the globe there is at present the expectant attitude which looks for another message, a further enlightenment, looks, in short, for the second coming of the Christ. For purposes of manifestation, it is His Will to use a pure human body through which to teach, and round that body will rage the misrepresentation and contumely that such a claim will assuredly raise. Some of it, at least, might be prevented by a few essential dates and circumstances able to be procured now, and perhaps impossible to obtain in future years. The young Disciple was being prepared for the great work, and from whom could reliable information be obtained, if not from his father? Like a flash the thought had come with such a firm conviction that I acted upon it at once, and determined to procure the necessary details. Let no one imagine it was an easy task. Many, many fruitless walks to Besant Gardens left me with my tablet clean and bare. Mr. Giddu Narayaniah is an extremely reticent man, and not at all eager to speak of his family affairs, and, as I followed him all over the gardens, from day to day, I knew he found me quite a nuisance. Still it did not do to be discouraged, so I continued to dog his footsteps, even though he did his best to put me off. The matter was settled, however, by the return of the President from Burma, where she had been for some weeks. With her consent, I again approached Mr. Narayaniah, and only with the weight of her approval was I able to induce him to put at my disposal a quiet half-hour, which it was his custom to spend in his sitting-room between 6 and 7 A.M. Accordingly, in the early morning hours, while yet the cool night air kept a restful hand upon the wakening world, I used to walk down to Mr. Narayaniah's house, under the shady palms of beautiful Adyar, and take down from his dictation the following records. Little by little each day, with thoughtful, deliberate care, the matter was dictated to me, and no attempt has been made

to alter or improve it in any way. The simple words of Mr. Narayaniah carry their own conviction of truth. All the documents I saw, and the little details of personal history are given, as pointing to qualities of character, showing out in childhood. If through this record, the missels of criticism and abuse, piling up to hurl at the Teacher when He comes, may be lessened by one stone, if, by forestalling suppositions and superstitions with a plain statement of facts, future generations may be saved some of the suffering which the obscurity surrounding the birth of Jesus, the Christ, entailed on countless thousands in the past, then the object of these pages will have been accomplished, and they will not have been written in vain.

(Sd). KATHLEEN E. TAYLOR,
Head-quarters of the Theosophical Society,
Adyar, Madras, India.
March 30th, 1911.

Order of the Star in the East.

This order has been founded to draw together those who, whether inside or outside the Theosophical Society, believe in the near coming of a great spiritual Teacher for the helping of the world. It is thought that its members may, on the physical plane, do something to prepare public opinion for His coming and to create an atmosphere of welcome and of reverence; and, on the higher planes, may unite in forming an instrument of service ready for His use. The Declaration of Principles, acceptance of which is all that is necessary for admission to the Order, is as follows :—

1. We believe that a great Teacher will soon appear in the world, and we wish so to live now that we may be worthy to know Him when He comes.

2. We shall try, therefore, to keep Him in our minds always, and to do in His name, and therefore to the best of our ability,

all the work which comes to us in our daily occupations.

3. As far as our ordinary duties allow, we shall endeavour to devote a portion of our time each day to some definite work which may help to prepare for His coming.

4. We shall seek to make *Devotion, Steadfastness* and *Gentleness* prominent characteristics of our daily life.

5. We shall try to begin and end each day with a short period devoted to the asking of His blessing upon all that we try to do for Him and in His name.

6. We regard it as our special duty to try to recognise and reverence greatness in whomsoever shown, and to strive to co-operate, as far as we can, with those whom we feel to be spiritually our superiors.

The Order was founded in Benares, India, on January 11th, 1911, and is now made public. Officers are appointed for each country, consisting of a National Representative—the Chief Officer in the country—and an Organising Secretary or Secretaries. There are no rules and no subscription, the expenses being met by donations. Each member, on sending As. 4 worth of stamps to the Organising Secretary, will receive a certificate of membership, list of officers, card, and a pamphlet on the work of the Order. The Badge of the Order is a silver five-pointed Star, in the form of a pin, stud, brooch, or pendant. These may be obtained, by V. P. P. from one of the Organising Secretaries, for Re. 1 each, and members are requested to wear them as far as possible. National Representatives wear a gold star. The colour of the Order is light blue, and a ribbon of only that colour may be worn with the Badge if desired. Purple is the colour of a higher Branch of the Order, into which admission is only obtained by an invitation conveyed through its Head.

When the Supreme Teacher came to found Christianity, the public mind was unprepared for His coming; only the Wise noted the shining of the Star in the East. The opposition stirred up was so strong, the recognition was confined to so few, that He was able to give the world the blessing of His physical presence only for three brief years. Perchance if our band grows large enough in every country to prepare men's hearts for His appearing, and to give Him effective welcome when He comes, the Lord of Love may remain with us for a period less brief, and do a work less restricted than that which was possible two thousand years ago. Some, at least, of the shafts that would otherwise be aimed at Him may fall on our willing breasts, and some of the opposition may exhaust itself on us, who gladly offer ourselves as His servants.

ANNIE BESANT.

All that is necessary in applying for membership is to write to one of the Organising Secretaries are follows:—

Dear Sir, I wish to join the Order of the Star in the East and fully accept its Declaration of Principles. Yours, etc.

Then full name and address *very clearly written* (printed handwriting or typewriting preferred).

Kindly notify any future changes of addresses to the same Officer.

In applying for information at any time, please write briefly and to the point, quote your certificate number, and enclose a stamped and addressed envelope for the reply.

The Organising Secretaries for India are:—

Rai Iqbal Narain Gurtu, M.A., L.L.B.
Gnana Geha, Benares City, U.P.

Don Fabrizio Ruspoli,
Head-quarters, Theosophical Society,
Adyar, Madras, S.

Members of the Order are recommended to study *The Changing World* and *The Immediate Future*, by Annie Besant, and *At the feet of the Master*, by J. Krishnamurthi.

These books, as well as copies of the present leaflet, may be obtained from *The Theosophist Office, Adyar, Madras S.*

Notice.

I find that many members of the Order desire to wear a ribbon along with the Star, and it has been decided that when that is done the ribbon shall be blue. At present each country has chosen its own shade of colour, and various kinds are therefore worn. I think it would be desirable that there should be uniformity in this respect, so a large quantity of ribbon of exactly the required shade has been ordered. This has been cut up into pieces nine inches in length, and I have myself magnetised it, so that it is now ready for the use of such members as desire it. The stock is in the hands of Lady Emily Lutyens, 29 Bloomsbury Square, London, who is ready to supply it to members in England, or to the National Representatives in other countries.

J. Krishnamurthi,
Head.

The ribbon to which reference has been made by the Head can be obtained by National Representatives at the rate of 3 (3.75 francs) for the piece of 11 yards (10 metres) post free. Each Representative will make his or her own arrangements for re-selling the ribbon to individual members.

Emily Lutyens.

Extract from an Address given by Mrs. Annie Besant to the members of the Esoteric Section on the 29th of December, 1911, in which she speaks of the distribution of certificates by Krishnamurthi on the previous day, and states that those members of the Esoteric Section who were present "can have in the future no doubt as to the body which is chosen by the Hierarchy for the using of the Lord."

"Let us turn now to another subject, and let me tell you that what I am now going to say to you I am speaking at Their direction. You have taken the new-old pledge and I can speak more freely, knowing that you trust me. Those of you who witnessed the extraordinary manisfestation of devotion in the hall yesterday where, I think, every one who was present felt a tremendous downrush of power, and realised that they were present at one of those scenes which mark themselves indelibly on the memory of those privileged to be present at an epoch-making occurrence those of you that were present can have in the future no doubt as to the body which is chosen by the Hierarchy for the using of the Lord. All of you who were present there can very well remember how exquisite and indescribable was that whole ceremony of the presentation of certificates to the new members of the Order of the Star in the East. There was no pre-arrangement about it. It simply "came to happen" as it did. When my Brother Charles Leadbeter asked me whether I was going to be present at the giving of the certificates, I simply said that I had been lecturing since four o'clock and was not going to preside at the meeting, but would like to see Krishnamurthi give the certificates. I had no more thought of it than that. Then we went and you know how beautiful the whole thing was, and how the mighty influence was felt and the

Bodhisattva overshadowed His future body, and made all feel His influence through it. The whole occurrence makes us think that the days we are hoping for are fast approaching, and that those of us who may be living at that time may consider ourselves to be in the enjoyment of a wonderful and fortunate karma."

FROM MRS. BESANT TO MRS. DENNIS.

May 10th, 1906.

"You asked me what you are to think of my position. This. I know Mr. Leadbeter to be a disciple of Master K. H. I have constantly met him out of the body and seen him with the Master and trusted their work. I know that if he were evil-minded this could not be. I cannot therefore join in hounding him out of the T. S., in which he has been one of our best workers. Further, I know how much terrible evil exists among young men, and the desperate straits in which many find themselves to deal with these evils and which fall to the lot of many Clergyman, parents and teachers, and I cannot bear unlimited condemnation of the attempt to deal with them. Trials come from time to time—Colomb attack on H. P. B. Doubtless from the worldly point of view, I should save trouble by deserting Mr. L:., but I do not see that to be my duty."

FROM MR. LEADBETER TO MRS. BESANT.

10, EAST PARADE,
HARROGATE, ENGLAND,
May 17th. 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

I telegraphed to you yesterday in brief the Report of the meeting of the British Committee. I talked over the matter with the Colonel before the members of the Committee arrived, and he strongly counselled me to put a written resignation in his hands before the meeting commenced so that he could use it at the right

time. He dictated to me the form which he suggested that it should take, expressly mentioning that I resigned in order to relieve the Society from the possibility of any embarassment. I doubted somewhat whether you would approve, because you advised against resignation in the first place, but circumstances have changed so much since then, and the vindictiveness of the American persecution has shown itself so clearly, that I hoped you would agree that as matters now stand it was the best course. Burnett, sent over as Commissioner, formally presented the charges before a full meeting of the British Executive Committee; a considerable mass of additional matter was included beyond that which was sent to us at Benares; also copies of your letter to Mrs. Dennis and of mine to Mr. Fullerton, both of which were distinctly private and would not have been used in this way by any person possessing even the rudiments of honour or decency. Many of the Committee seemed friendly towards me, and the Colonel specially so, but Mead showed exceedingly bitter hostility, and Bertram, though silent for the most part, asked one very nasty question obviously intended to implicate you in the matter. I appealed to the Chairman as to whether such a question was permissible, and the opinion of the majority clearly was that it was not, so I left it unanswered. After two hours of discussion and cross-examination, and then an hour and a half of stormy debate at which I was not present, the Committee recommended the Colonel to accept the resignation, which I had previously placed in his hands; he formally did so, and so the matter stands at present.

This being so, to what work should I now apply myself? It is, of course, obvious that I cannot, at any rate for a very considerable time, do anything in the way of public lecturing. I think that Burma might perhaps still be possible: or is there any other piece of work in India which I could undertake? I could not take the Head-mastership of a school, because of the want of the University Degree, but I might neverthless be of use in giving English lessons at some such school or something of that sort. I want a quiet time in which to do some writing, but naturally I

should prefer to spend that time in the tropics rather than in England. As far as we know at present, Basil and Fritz will continue to be with me and to act as Secretaries just as they have been doing, though during this time the former at any rate will be preparing for his University course with my assistance, as we arranged in India. So if there is any work that I can do, please let me know of it. Please continue to write to this address, as I shall stay here or in this neighbourhood until I hear from you.

I met Martyn in Rome, and told him of this accusation. I found that he had already received a letter from Dennis giving it in a wildly exaggerated form but had simply put the letter in his pocket and kept silence. It is possible, by the way, that I might find an opportunity to be useful in Australia or New Zealand. Martyn seemed to feel a little difficulty with regard to the circulation of the last Eastern School notice. He asked whether it would not be wiser to send it only to those whom you might choose for the Inner School, as if it were sent to members obviously unfit for admission, it could only arouse in them a sense of jealousy and wounded pride. He instanced such old Members as C * and P * , both good people in their way, yet always involved in quarrels with others, so that to admit them would be to foredoom the experiment to failure. Mrs. W * H * is another case in point. He thought that it would make the work much easier if no one knew of the existence of the Inner School except those whom you choose as eligible for it. Considering the condition of affairs in Australia there does seem reason in this ; and Martyn is so eminently a man of common sense that I always feel disposed to allow great weight to any suggestion which he ventures to make. His earnest desire was that you should yourself personally select members for the Inner School when you visit Australia : would it be possible to allow the majority of Australian members to wait till then ? Martyn himself and John are, I should think, fully worthy of immediate admission, and I think that I should feel sure of three others in Australia, but hardly more than that. Martyn also mentioned that you had at

one time told him that to save time he might receive his Eastern School papers for distribution direct from you, instead of through Mrs. Mead, but that up to the present, that promise had not come into effect, as everything still reached him *via* London, and thereby much time was lost. He further says that in sending out such papers Mrs. Mead fails to give any instructions as to how they are to be used and that in this way he is sometimes left in doubt as to exactly what you wish.

Technically, my resignation from the Theosophical Society removes me from the Eastern School, also, so that I ought not to speak at or even attend any Eastern School meetings. Of course if some of the same people, meeting not as an Eastern School group but merely as friends, should invite me to meet them and should ask me questions, I know of no reason why in that unofficial capacity I should not reply to them. The Colonel saw clearly that if I had declined to resign and had thereby forced the Committtee into advising that I be expelled, there would certainly have been a split in the ranks of the Society—a catastrophy which you will agree that we must at all costs avoid. Please let me know what is going on, for down here I shall have but little opportunity of hearing. I need hardly say that though not officially a member, I am as utterly at your service and that of the Colonel as ever. With very much love from us both,

I am ever,
Yours most affectionately,
(Sd). C. W. LEADBEATER.

10, EAST PARADE,
HARROGATE, ENGLAND,
June 12th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

Your letters of May 17th and 24th have been forwarded to me together. Your resignation is absolutely unthinkable, it will not do

to desert a ship because some of its crew mistake their line of action under difficult conditions. My own resignation was because there must not be even a possibility that the Society may be credited with an opinion from which the majority of its members dissent. I quite agree that the action in America has been not only precipitate, but insane. I think Fullerton now begins to doubt somewhat, for he tries to justify that precipitancy by complaining that Raja was writing to certain friends in my favour, and that so he was forced to abandon his wish for secrecy. Dates, however, show this claim to be inaccurate; your reply to Mrs. Dennis's letter was dated February 26th and could not therefore reach her before almost the end of March, whereas those letters from Miss. K * which I sent you were dated March 9th and 15th respectively; so that the matter was known to many, and Fullerton was telegraphing and writing about it considerably before our answers were received. Even if this were not so, it would seem ridiculous that the committee of a Section should feel itself forced into suicidal action by anything that Raja could say or do. The truth seems to be that they all lost their heads, and so were hurried into a serious mistake—perhaps impelled by those who are always ready to take advantage of our errors. I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I recently wrote to Fullerton, pointing out what I think should have been done; but it is useless to assail his triple armoured prejudice when once he has made up his mind. As to the E. S. that is your province, and I dare not even attempt to advise, but I feel strongly that though the action of these people seems to me insane, cruel and ungrateful, they have yet persuaded themselves somehow that it is their duty, even their painful duty, so that their error is one of judgment, not of intention, and I have made too many mistakes in judgment myself to feel in the least angry with them.

When I attended the meeting of the British Committee, I saw for the first time what is called the additional evidence, or rebuttal. I presume that both that and the report of the Committee meeting have reached you long before this. D. P. was their third

boy; it is true that he has had epileptic seizures, and is at present undergoing treatment which is curing them, but they have no right to try to connect this with me. During the twelve months that he was with me he was perfectly well, and would have remained so if he had stayed with me. The boy who had previously engaged in undesirable practice was G. N. The other point I answered in a previous letter.

You suggest my living at Cambridge or Oxford until Basil takes his Degree. I also had thought of this, but our best friends in London are strongly of opinion that if I stay in England, the enemies of the Society will make some endeavour to set the law in motion against me. While I cannot see how such a charge could be sustained, it is unfortunately true that if it were publicly made, the harm to the Society would be the same whether it succeeded or failed, so I am taking their advice, and waiting quietly in *pralaya* for a while. As to the future, I should like your advice. For the moment I am living comfortably and inexpensively in retirement, and I can continue to do so until matters settle down a little, so that we can see what is wise. If there is still work that I can do, work not openly Theosophical, so that the eager Mead and Keightly cannot follow me with their persecutions, I shall be glad to do it—if it be in India, so much the better, of course. Is there any possibility of Rangoon, considering the Chakravarthy and Dhammapala influence? Also, if it brings me in enough to live upon, it will be well, for I suppose the income from royalties will drop almost to zero. While I am quiet here, I shall probably do some more writing, though I must wait some time before I can publish unless I can do so under a *nom de plume*. But in any case there is no harm in resting quietly here for a few months, if you have no suggestion which requires immediate action. With very much love from us both.

Yours affectionately,

(Sd). C. W. LEADBETER.

10, EAST PARADE, HARROGATE,
June 30th, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

Your letter of the 7th has just reached me, and I will try to answer it as clearly as possible. I do not know what you have heard, but evidently some exaggerated or distorted story. I held back nothing consciously when we spoke at Benares—why should I from you, whom I have always so fully trusted? Besides, you are perfectly able to see all for yourself, so I could not conceal anything even if I would. I could ask no better statement of my case, if it had to be stated, than that which you yourself suggested in one of your recent letters. But, dear, you are now bringing in all sorts of occult and complicated reasons which for me have not existed. My opinion in the matter, which so many think so wrong, was formed long before Theosophical days, and before I knew anything about all these inner matters. I did not even originate it, for it came to me first through ecclesiastical channels, though I should be breaking an old promise if I said more. As to that; there also there were unquestionably none but the highest intentions. It was put somewhat in this way. There is a natural function in man, not in itself shameful (unless indulged at another person's expense) any more than eating or drinking; but, like them, capable, if misused and uncontrolled, of leading to all kinds of excesses and sins. The Church would say that the very few, the great saints, (as we should say, those who had practised celibacy in past lives)can altogether repress this and rise above it, just as a very few have been able in ecstacy or trance to pass long periods without food; and certainly where that is possible, it is the highest course of all. But for the majority this function also will have its way, • • • The idea was to take it in hand before the age when it grew so strong as to be practically uncontrollable, • • • • • • This, it was said (and I think truly enough), would prevent the boy from turning his attention to the other sex, save him from any other temptation later towards prostitution, and bring him to the time of his marriage (if he was to marry) without

previous contract with any other woman. (Prostitution was always held up to us as the summit of wickedness because of its effect on the woman, its degradation of another to minister to lust). I have known cases in which precisely that result was attained though I think the suggestion was intended chiefly for those who were expected to adopt a celibate life as priests or monks. Of course you will understand that this sexual side of life was not made prominent, but was taken only as one point amidst a large number of directions for the regulation of the life.

I knew this to have worked well with many in Christian days, to have saved many boys from • • • • • • • • which is very much more common among boys of fourteen than any one who has not had the opportunity of enquiry can possibly imagine, and from the looseness of life which almost invariably follows a few years later ; and when I learnt from Theosophy a so much wider view of life, there seemed little to alter these considerations. The power to see the horrible thought-forms which so frequently cluster round children of both sexes, and to sense even more fully than before, the wide spread of evil among the young were, if anything, additional arguments in favour of definite regulation,. So when boys came specially under my care, I mentioned this matter to them among others, always trying to avoid any sort of false shame, and to make the whole thing appear as natural and simple as possible, though, of course, not a matter to be spoken of to others. If you read any of my notes to the boys referring to this (I am told some of them have been pilfered and circulated), you will find me asking carefully for exact particulars, and cautioning them. • • • • • The regularity is the preliminary step ; it makes the whole thing a matter of custom instead of an irregular yielding to emotion, and also makes easy the habit of keeping the thoughts entirely away from it until the prescribed moment.

Pardon me for going into these distasteful details but I do not wish to leave anything unexplained, I thought I had conveyed all these in my letter to Fullerton (please look at it again and see) and

in our conversation at Benares; but now at least it is surely clear. It appears to me that the arguments hold good, that probably on the whole this is the least dangerous way of dealing with a very difficult problem; but, as I told you at Benares, I am entirely willing to defer to your judgment, and since so many good and sensible friends besides yourself are decidedly against my view, I am ready to yield my opinion and refrain from mentioning it in the future, so you will not hear any more of it.

Now that I have tried to make everything as plain as I can, may I in my turn seek for a little light as to what is happening? You know the American officials wanted me cast out lest they should be supposed to be identified with this opinion which they abhor; well, practically that has been done, I have resigned and all connection is severed. What more do they want? They apparently blame you for affording me sympathy and countenance, and they talk as though you were resisting my expulsion from the Society, even though I am already outside it! Do they wish to interfere with our private friendship? One would suppose so, since that is all that is left, though indeed that to me means everything, and I care little for the outer form of association, pleasant though that was too while it lasted. Assuredly, I am sorry to leave the Society to which I have loyally devoted twenty-three years of service. Yet I know that I am inside the same as ever, and that if any friends will not let me do the work of the Masters in one direction, they will find means to employ me in some other. I cannot now hold any office in the Theosophical Society or the Eastern School, but if in a private capacity I can help you in any way (as, for example by answering questions from those who are still friendly to me,) you know how glad I shall be.

You speak of defending the advice I gave; but you cannot defend it, because you don't agree with it, as you have said clearly from the first, therefore the clamour of the American Executive against you is silly. All that you can say (when you think it necessary) is that you know my intention in giving such advice to be good; but it is not a matter of great importance whether other

people recognize that fact or not, for surely it matters little what opinion they hold of me. "To our own Master we stand or fall;" and He understands.

I wish very much that we could have been together on the physical plane to meet all these "charges;" so many people seem to be anxious to create misunderstanding between us, and their poisonous work is easier when we are thus far apart. Yet they shall not succeed. With very much love.

I am as ever,
Yours most affectionately,
(Sd). C. W. LEADBETER.

10, EAST PARADE,
HARROGATE, ENGLAND,
11th September, 1906.

MY DEAR ANNIE,

I have your letter of August 16th. I am sorry you cannot see your way to sending out my little comment, but of course if you feel that attitude to be your duty there is no more to be said. I will try to send that note to some of the people; but I do not know the addresses of large numbers, and it is inevitable that I shall fail to reach many. Also I run some risk of sending to some who have not seen your letter, which I wished to avoid. However we must do the best we can.

What I do not yet quite understand is the complete change which seems to have come over your attitude since we discussed the matter at Benares. You had all the facts before you then, except that only you supposed the intervals to be longer, as I understand it; but you had not then adopted this theory of glamour, nor cast behind you the consistent experience of many years. And although the idea of shorter intervals might alter your opinion as to the advisability, it cannot effect the principle of the thing; that was surely the same then as now, and you yourself,

though disapproving of the advice, spoke of it as at least better than that often given by doctors to young men. So I do not quite understand the reason of the sudden change. Nor do I quite see why you write as though I were still persistently teaching these doctrines, though I have repeatedly said that I am willing to defer to your opinion. You know I never for a moment suggested that the Masters dictated or approved of such teaching. I should myself simply infer that They left me to make my own discoveries, and presumably therefore did not consider that this one thing outweighs everything else, as you apparently do now, though you as certainly did not think so when we were together at Benares. Both matrimony and prostitution must obviously be worse, because in each case they involve action upon another person. * * * Even supposing that opinion of mine was utterly and radically wrong, is it not more probable that in spite of that defect, they were willing to use what was good in me, than that both of us and several other people have been consistently and successfully deluded for many years, especially when you consider how much good work came out of the delusion? If we are to suppose the whole transaction carried out by Dark Powers at the cost of infinite trouble, you do not see that the balance of result of that transaction is enormously against them? I suppose it is useless to write, because you have felt a certain line to be your duty and you naturally therefore see everything from that point of view; but at least do not let yourself be persuaded to think that I am still carrying on that line of teaching in spite of you; I yielded my opinion to yours at once, but it does not seem to have made any difference. All through the affair, I have guided myself as far as possible by what I thought you would wish.

Do not think from the above that I am repining or blaming you in any way; as long as your friendship remains, opinions are a matter of minor importance. I trust you absolutely, knowing that you will always do, and are now doing, what seems to you your duty. I think if I had been physically with you, you would have seen more fully exactly what I meant, and perhaps your

decision would have been different, but in that case the trial for me would have been quite different also; so probably full advantage has been taken of the present position of affairs. In the end, all will certainly be well, even if things are a little comfortless in the meantime, and at least nothing can ever change my affection and regard for you. So if ever I can be of use by standing at your side again, you may count upon me as already there. With very much love.

I am ever,
Yours most affectionately,
(Sd). C. W. LEADBETER.

Jinarajadasa's Circular, of April 26, 1906.

MY DEAR MR. ....

On the 9th of this month I received a letter from a correspondent mentioning the charge against Mr. Leadbeter. As this was the first information I had had of a matter which I since gathered has been discussed by many persons in this country, I was utterly surprised. The charge according to the letters received was as follows; that Mr. Leadbeter had been charged and proved guilty of the crime that ostracises a man, namely, ... On the 14th of this month, I went from Holyoak (Mass) to New York to see Mr. Fullerton, who was good enough to tell me what he had heard. Perhaps my remarks on these charges might be of interest to you, hence I write that what follows :—

First as to the charge of . . . . From all the information that has so far come to my knowledge, and I think that I am now acquainted with practically all that there is, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that there is not the faintest particle of proof of the charge, nor anything that to a clear-sighted man would seem even to justify such a charge. I gather that this accusation against Mr. Leadbeter has been made in other countries.

I know that, as a matter of fact, this insinuation was made by some people in Ceylon, while he was in that country between 1885-89. I heard of it when I was a boy of 12, and before I knew Mr. Leadbeter. But soon after my acquaintance with him, I understood why the charge was made. He was especially kind to some boys there, and helped them always. My brother, who died some years ago, was one of these boys. In fact he knew Mr. Leadbeter before I did, and helped him enthusiastically, tramping from village to village with him on Sundays, and teaching in the Sunday schools started by Mr. Leadbeter. Mr. Leadbeter helped my brother and another lad, and latter myself, though he was attached to many, helping them in their school-work, doing all that could be done by an elder friend to help the younger. But the Sinhalese people were then deeply suspicious of his work and of the work of the Theosophical Society, and slanders and insinuations against all the leaders of the Theosophical movement, Madame Blavatsky, Colonel Olcott and others, were not uncommon, coming from all those that opposed the work of the Society. Buddhist priests and laymen, and Christian missionaries. Above all it seemed difficult for the Sinhalese to imagine that a man could, out of pure affection, do so much for a boy as Mr. Leadbeter did for some boys. That they had to postulate an ulterior motive, and that they did nothing more than their inborn suspicion made possible. I have often had bitterly to regret, and that there was some doctrine after all in the saying of Bishop Heber about Ceylon, perhaps the most beautiful island of the East that he was aware of, that prosperity pleases but only man is vile. I have known Mr. Leadbeter for 19 years, during 11 of these I lived with him. Many a year, when his means were little, we have lived and worked together in one little room. I saw him night and day these years, and I think I can honestly say that there was no act or thought of his that was hidden from me, During all these years of intimacy, I never saw or heard from him the slightest thing to raise even a suspicion in my mind or this charge of • • • • • • . When it is

hinted that there are charges of a frightful nature against a man, we jump at one conclusion and think of this charge. I gather that some think that Mr. Leadbeter is "a sexual pervert." Witness, for instance, his liking every boy, as though there can be no rational explanation for that. Secondly, his irritability. How this can easily come about, I know. Those who have to travel about and lecture, as he did, meeting new people, thrown constantly into new surroundings and magnetism, that constant need to adapt oneself to new circumstances every week almost. But Mr. Leadbeter did about ten times the work that I did, night and day he was as it, and the result was obvious to me when I saw him after several years in September 1904, utter weariness of body, the over-work and nervous fag that seemed more than normal with him, are other reasons for irritability than sexual perversion.

Mr. Leadbeter's antipathy for womankind, too, is being brought to buttress this charge. But when charges are made we have all facts that harmonise with them and forget the other facts, as in this instance. Mr. Leadbeter's admiration and regard for certain ladies, his never-failing courtesy to them, such women as have seen this side of the man will acknowledge that his antipathy to women might have a far more likely explanation than any sexual perversion.

But there is a truer charge that Mr. Leadbeter taught some boys • • • • — • • • • • . Mr. Leadbeter admits it, but he deserves to be heard on the matter. Briefly summed up, this is what he says.

In the generality of boys there are few whose constitution is such that they have no strong desire to gratify sexual instinct. They reach manhood and marry and the husband is as virgin as the wife. But there are many boys who are so built that sexual passions arise early, very largely for purely physiological reasons. What advice is to be given to them? To a boy of this passionate nature to inculcate virginity is to tell him of a course of conduct which, much as his higher nature might direct, is impossible for

lack of a flaw mastering the will. The world's general solution is illicit intercourse with women. This is not considered a crime, and many a doctor advises it. Under these conditions, Mr. Leadbeter's opinion is that this is not justifiable. He holds that when a boy is full of these, he is surrounding himself with undesirable influences, that act and react on him. No doctor thinks of this element. Let the boy, according to Mr. Leadbeter, practice • • • • — • • • • •, and so make it possible to free himself from the thoughts devising safeguards with the idea that the boy might pass through a critical period with the least harm to himself. Mr. Leadbeter admits that he has so advised certain boys. That Mr. Leadbeter goes contrary to the world's opinion of this practice, he knows. But he believes he is a physician that might administer poison in some cases with the purpose of effecting a cure. That the world will condemn Mr. Leadbeter for his advice it is obvious. But can we at-all impartially examine his action ?

We have certain ideas in which we are brought up in this world and one, certainly a strange one, is, condoning illicit intercourse. We know that men are not angels, and so no one insists that a man shall not have intercourse with a woman before marriage. We little think of the woman, except to condemn her, and, in certain countries, to punish her. Our disapprobation of the social evil is so slight that certainly to offer it is the only possible remedy to many a youth under a difficult circumstance. Let a man sin in this way. It matters little. Yet that this solution is an outrage on womanhood and humanity, and is not the solution that we seek, I know in my inmost being, even though I have accepted it and followed it in those times when desire forces were too strong for my mastery.

Then there is Mr. Leadbeter's advice that this is not the solution. What the solution is I don't know. Some day, no doubt, humanity will discover it. Certainly it is not the solution offered by Mr. Leadbeter. I should never offer it as even the shadow of one. But that he has conscientiously thought it the

lesser evil, and that the advice he has given is from pure motive, I fully believe. That he goes contrary to the world's opinion I clearly see, but I say it does not therefore follow that he is not sincere, nor that he is "a sexual pervert" with the coarse astral body, as one correspondent suggests. Mistaken in it I think he is fully, and I doubt not that he is willing to bear the consequences of his mistakes. Guilty of any immoral intent, I firmly believe he is not. As to the more serious charge of · · · · · · , I say I have not seen or heard the slightest thing to justify such an accusation, much as many a little fact can easily be twisted to support it. Mrs. Besant, who has been fully informed of the facts by Mr. Leadbeter himself and by others, is of the opinion I express. She dissents absolutely from Mr. Leadbeter's views. But she is fully convinced that though mistaken he has been thoroughly sincere throughout and has never for a moment had any immoral intent at all.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) G. JINARAJADASA.

Cablegram to Annie Besant from Jinarajadasa, June 21st, 1906.

Besant, Benares. Does your cable Dennis mean endorsement action? School offers pressing expulsion. Do you repudiate acts altogether, or only his advice? Has large body friends America believing firmly, sincerey, purity motives. Newspapers published appear June 6. Please cable fully. Will reimburse.

Cablegram from Annie Besant to Jinarajadasa, dated, Srinagar, Cashmere, June 25th, 1906.

Consider official action unwise. Approve resignation. Repudiated teaching and action.

Poona, dated August 23rd, 1906, from N. D. Khandalwala to Annie Besant.

"The whole of Leadbeter's attitude seems to indicate that he believed the foul practice was permissible in occultism and that his Master would not object to it. You say that "In fact excitement and misuse of the sexual organs is one way of stimulating astral powers and is largely used by some schools of [pseudo occultism." You have put it as a fact before the Esoteric Section members that excitement and misuse of the sexual organs leads to the acquirement of astral powers. There are good and bad and indifferent members, and the sexual instinct once getting the upper hand in some members, your statement may be taken hold of in the practice resorted to, to have some inkling, at least, of astral powers. In trying to answer an awkward question, you have made the statement that Leadbeter may have acquired astral powers only. He, however, cannot be said to possess mere astral powers. You allude to Mr. Judge and say that he fell a victim to an appearance which was stimulated by some practical entity and that it represented for the time being a revered form which was not closely examined, and you suggest that Leadbeter was also deceived by such a form. Your coming into the Theosophical Society and the Esoteric Section has to some extent raised the moral tone, but certain undesirable elements which have come into the Society from its commencement still remain. Since such a grave scandal as that of Leadbeter has come out, may I ask whether you are quite sure that nothing wrong has hitherto taken place at Benares, whether there have not been certain practices

which if they be not called immoral have at least been highly indecorous. I am writing as a real friend and well-wisher of the Society and not as one who wants to raise differences."

Letter from Mrs. Dennis to Mrs. Besant.

Chicago, January 25th, 1906.

DEAR MRS. BESANT,

I have suddenly learned the cause of the.................... boy's bitter hatred and contempt for Mr. Leadbeter, of which I spoke to you in London and which cause he had at that time refused to reveal. It is not, as I had supposed, a childish and personal grievance, but as you will see from the charges and evidence formulated below, was the result of morally criminal acts on the part of Mr. Leadbeter himself. Before he was allowed to go to ....with Mr. Leadbeter, Mr. Leadbeter had told the parents of this boy that his first effort in training boys was a frank talk on the sex question with careful instruction to them of the necessity for an absolutely pure and virgin life. He stated that he liked to gain their confidence while they were very young and before they had erred through ignorance. He wished to inform them before even a first offence, which he said was fatal, so absolute must be their virginity. This was the understanding between Mr. Leadbeter and the boy's parents in arranging for his travels with him, and in connection with which the following charges are made against Mr. Leadbeter.

The Charges.

First, that he is teaching young boys given into his care habits of • • • • — • • • • • and demoralizing personal practices.

Second, that he does this with deliberate intent and under the guise of occult training or with the promise of the increase of physical manhood.

Third, that he has demanded, at least in one case, promises of the utmost secrecy.

[The testimony of two boys, given by Mrs. Dennis in this letter to Mrs. Besant, is not fit for public reading. One boy said to his mother "Mr. Leadbeter told me that it would make me strong and manly." The other boy said, when asked what excuse Mr. Leadbeter gave for such conduct :—"Mother, I think tha was the worst part of the whole thing. Somehow he made me believe it was Theosophical."

" Mrs. Dennis then continues as follows :—

Only after searching questions by the parents was the foregoing evidence given, they have persisted in maintaining secrecy as long as possible. At the present time neither of these boys knows of the other's experiences, nor is aware that the other has told his story. There is therefore no possibility of collusion as they live some distance apart and practically never see each other. This constitutes the substance of the charges and the evidence which I went to New York to submit to the officials who sign this statement with me. They agree that these charges are so grave, the evidence so direct and substantial, the possible consequences to the movement so calamitous, that immediate consideration, searching investigation and prompt action are demanded. Together we decided that in justice to the cause which has associated us, to Mr. Leadbeter and to you, we could do no less than place this whole matter before you, asking you to advise us what action you will take. We therefore await your reply, and scarcely need to say that we will do everything in our power to protect the good name of the Theosophical Society, and to keep this matter from the public, not merely to screen an individual but to protect the cause. To this end, those who know have pledged each other to the utmost secrecy and circumspection so that no hint of it shall escape them. A copy of this letter and statement is sent to Mr. Leadbeter, registered, in the same mail with this. You will also receive by registered book-post a copy of the "Adams Cable Codex" on the fly leaf of which is written my cable address. This is the code which I use. With deep regret over the necessity for sending you this statement, I assure

you that I hope to stand by you in your effort for wise action all along the line.

Faithfully,
(Sd.) HELEN. I. DENNIS.

I subscribe.
(Sd.) E. W. DENNIS.

The undersigned having heard the statement of Mrs. Dennis respecting her investigation into the alleged facts concerning Mr. Leadbeter, are emphatically of opinion that justice to Mr. Leadbeter, as well as to the American Section and the whole Theosophical Society, requires from Mrs. Besant, as Head of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society, a most thorough enquiry. And they no less emphatically concur with Mrs. Dennis in her opinion that the gravity of the case demands that such an enquiry should be carried out with all possible promptness and Mrs. Besant's decision be made known to them.

(Sd.) ALEXANDER FULLERTON, *General Secretary, American Section, Theosophical Society.*

FRANK F. KNOTHE, *Assistant General Secretary.*

HELEN I. DENNIS, *Corresponding General Secretary, American Section, Esoteric Section.*

ELIZABETH M. CHIDESTER, *Assistant Corresponding Secretary, American Section, Esoteric Section.*

Letter from Mr. Leadbeter to Mr. Fullerton.

SHANTI KUNJA, BENARES, INDIA,
February 27, 1906,

MY DEAR FULLERTON,

I have received the document signed by you, Knothe, Mrs. Dennis and Mrs. Chidester. Fortunately it arrived while I was

staying with Mrs. Besant, and I at once took it to her room and discussed it with her, as my copy came before hers. She concurs with me in thinking it best for me to answer it by explaining to you the principle underlying my action and then commenting upon the particular cases adduced. I hoped that my friends in America knew me well enough not to attribute to an immoral motive anything that I do; but since this is apparently not yet so, I must write with entire frankness about some subjects which are not usually discussed at the present day.

The business of discovering and training specially hopeful younger members and preparing them for Theosophical work has been put into my charge. Possibly the fact that I have been associated with the training of young men and boys all my life (originaly of course on Christian lines) is one reason for this, because of the experience it has given me. As a result of that experience, I know that the whole question of sex feeling is the principal difficulty in the path for boys and girls, and very much harm is done by the prevalent habit of ignoring the subject and fearing to speak of it to young people. The first information about it should come from parents or friends, not from servants or bad companions. Therefore I always speak of it quite frankly and naturally to those whom I am trying to help, when they become sufficiently familiar with me to make it possible. The methods of dealing with the difficulty are two. A certain type of boy can be carried through his youth absolutely virgin, and can pass through the stages of puberty without being troubled at-all by sensual emotions; but such boys are few. The majority pass through a stage when their minds are filled with such matters, and consepuently surround themselves with huge masses of most undesirable thought-forms which perpetually react upon them and keep them in a condition of emotional ferment. These thought-forms are the vehicles of appalling mischief since though them disembodied entities can and constantly do act upon the child. The conventional idea that such thoughts do not matter so long as they do not issue in overt acts is not only untrue; it is

absolutely the reverse of the truth. I have seen literally hundreds of cases of this horrible condition, and have traced the effects which it produces in after life. In this country of India the much-abused custom of early marriages prevents all difficulty on this score.

(Mr. Leadbeter here enters into details of "this trouble" and of his remedy for it, which are not fit for publication).

Proceeding, he says:—I know this is not the conventional view, but it is quite true for all that, and there is no comparison in the harm done in the two cases even at the time quite apart from the fact that the latter plan avoids the danger of entanglement with women or bad boys later on. You may remember how St. Paul remarked that while it was best of all to remain a celibate, in the rare cases where that was possible, for the rest it was distinctly better to marry than to burn with lust. Brought down to the level of the boy, that is practically what I mean and although I know that many people do not agree with the view, I am at a loss to understand how anyone can consider it criminal-especially when it is remembered that it is based upon the clearly visible results of the two lines of action. A doctor might advise against it, principally on the ground that the habit might degenerate into unrestrained * * * * — * * * * * ; but this danger can be readily avoided by full explanation, and it must be remembered that the average doctor cannot see the horrible astral effects of perpetual desire. Having thus explained the general position, let me turn to the particular cases cited.

Particulars concerning the two boys who had confessed certain things to their mothers that they alleged to have taken place while they were in the charge of Mr. Leadbeter are here given, and these particulars are unfit for publication. In speaking of the first boy, Mr. Leadbeter admitted that he tried " one experiment, and only one, " and that he did mention to the boy that physical growth is frequently promoted by the setting in motion of those currents, but that they needed regulation. The second boy, he stated, had entered into undesirable relations with a person designated

"Z", before coming under his care, and the boy had promised to try to drop these relations and to lead the life of an ascetic. Later on this boy wrote to him, and said that he could not lead the ascetic life, and asked for advice; and then Mr. Leadbeter gave him certain advice, which he considered, under the circumstances, the best to meet the case.

Concluding, Mr. Leadbeter says:—I write this to you as the first signatory of the document; how much of it you can repeat to the ladies concerned is for you to decide. I have shown it to Mrs, Besant, as I shall do any other correspondence that may ensue, for I have no secrets from her. I am very sorry indeed that this trouble has arisen, and that any act of mine, however well intentioned, should have been the cause of it, I can only trust that when my friends have read this perfectly frank statement, they will at least acquit me of the criminality which their letter seems to suggest, even though they may still think me guilt of an error in judgment.

Mr. Dennis announces his intention of returning unopened any letter from me, which seems scarcely fair, as I believe even a criminal is usually allowed to state his case. But since he prefers to close all communication with me, it is not for me to ask him to reconsider his decision. If he later becomes willing to allow correspondence with his family to be resumed, I am always ready on my side, for nothing will change my affectionate feeling towards all its members.

Yours ever most cordially,

(Sd.) C. W. LEADBETER.

P. S.—I see that there is one point in Mrs. Dennis's letter on which I have not commented—her reference to a conversation on the necessity of purity for aspirants for occult development, and to the fact that (for a certain stage of it) one life without even a single lapse is required, It is, of course, obvious that the lapse mentioned meant connection with a woman or criminal relations with a man, and did not at all include such advice as is suggested in the body of my letter, but since there has been so much misunderstanding, it is better for me to say this in so many words, so please paste this slip at the foot of my letter on the subject.